MEMOIRS

OF

LADY WOODFORD.

WRITTEN BY HERSELF,

AND ADDRESSED TO A FRIEND.

IN TWO VOLUMES

VOL. II.

DUBLIN:

PRINTED BY WILLIAM SPOTSWOOD,
NO. 4, ESSEX-GATE.

M DCC LXXXII.

M

L A

As
begge
room
comp
tried
and t
told
be lef
Wh
bed,
that t
of al
Lord
happ
him,
ſo to
deſpa
In
—the
ſigne
me e
violen
choly
frien

MEMOIRS

OF

LADY WOODFORD.

AS ſoon as Lady Woodford was gone, I begged Mrs. Stevens to let me retire to the room, in which I was to reſt that night. She complied with my requeſt, after having firſt tried to prevail on me to promiſe to come down, and to endeavour to eat a bit of ſupper.—I told her, "it was impoſſible, and deſired to be left to myſelf." She at length, conſented.

When I was alone, I threw myſelf on the bed, and gave a looſe to an affliction which, at that time, ſeemed to bid defiance to every mode of alleviation: and when I conſidered that Lord Woodford would be rendered very unhappy, on hearing of my haſty flight from him, my anguiſh was doubled, often did I ſhriek ſo torturing were my ſenſations ſharpened by deſpair.

In a few days, the treatment which I received —the gentleſt imaginable—made me more reſigned to my lot, though it could not render me entirely contented with it.—Fewer were my violent exclamations, but I ſunk into a melancholy ſtate from which not all Mrs. Stevens's friendly efforts could rouſe me.—Lord Wood-

ford

ford engroſſed my thoughts, day and night; and I fancied that he was as wretched as myſelf.

At laſt, Lady Woodford made her appearance: ſhe looked as if ſhe had been ill.—She was very ſerious: yet ſhe was particularly kind to me. I longed, impatiently, to know how my Lord did, but was afraid to enquire after him.—However, the complacency of her behaviour, and the good natured tone of her voice, when ſhe ſpoke to me, conquered my diffidence. Lifting up my eyes to her friendly face, I ſaid, "Has your ladyſhip been indiſpoſed?"

"No, Fanny," replied ſhe with an affectionate voice.

"Has my Lord?" added I eagerly—while my cheeks glowed.

"He is better," anſwered ſhe, with a ſigh.

"Gracious Heaven!" cried I, cruelly alarmed, "has he been ſick then? Wretch that I "am!—perhaps I have been the cauſe of his "illneſs."

I could ſay no more; I ſunk down into a chair: a violent ſhower of tears hindered me from fainting. I gave myſelf up to a ſorrow which I could not ſuppreſs, and the indulgence of it afforded *ſome* eaſe to my mind. I was even rejoiced, if I may uſe the word, ſo to grieve, as my Lord had ſuffered ſo much on *my* account.

Lady Woodford appeared to be conſiderably touched at my affliction. She aſſured me that her ſon had been very much out of order, and that, to her extreme concern, *my* removal from him had occaſioned his indiſpoſition; "But I hope," continued ſhe, "as he is now growing "better,

" better, that time will bring him into a con-
" dition to hear reaſon."

I ſighed, for I knew that if *his* behaviour ſhould prove anſwerable to *her* wiſhes, I ſhould be totally forſaken by him.—I was convinced indeed, of the propriety of ſuch a behaviour on his ſide, but I could not help grieving to think that there ſhould be a neceſſity for it. I endeavoured to appear compoſed, but all my ſtruggles were to no purpoſe.

Lady Woodford ſaw my ſtruggles, and ſhe pitied me; yet ſhe could not relinquiſh the deſign ſhe had ſo long projected, with a heart-felt pleaſure.—She made a number of affectionate ſpeeches to me, but when ſhe roſe to go, added, " You will remember your promiſe,
" Fanny, if my ſon, when he comes abroad,
" offers to viſit you."

My pride here combated a little with my tenderneſs for Lord Woodford; and I thought I ſhould diſcover conſiderable meanneſs by ſhewing a deſire to come into a family who were ſo unwilling to have me allied to them. I, therefore, aſſured her, with a haughtineſs for which I afterwards condemned myſelf, " That ſhe might depend upon my not ſeeing
" my Lord."

As ſoon as ſhe was gone, I repented of my promiſe, and of the manner in which I confirmed it. I began to look upon myſelf as the moſt abject of human creatures, for receiving favours from a lady who beheld me in ſo deſpicable a light, when it was in my power to gain a ſubſiſtence with my pencil. But when I alſo conſidered, that my mother might poſſibly find me out, and drag me back to Sir Thomas, or ſell me to any other man who

would lay down a large ſum for me, I was ſhocked, I was terrified, I was humbled to the duſt: and by the time that I reached my chamber, wondered how ſuch a little inſignificant girl of no birth nor fortune, ſhould ever have imagined that a man of Lord Woodford's rank would think of making her his wife. I even began to be aſtoniſhed at my aſſurance, for having ever thought of ſuch a thing. "To imagine myſelf deſerving of an alliance "with Lord Woodford, how ridiculous! I "have met with an uncommon friend in Lady "Woodford, and ought to thank Heaven for "being in the ſituation I am: yet how dif-"ferently was I ſituated in my little rural re-"treat, bleſſed with my Lord's charming "ſociety! with him converſing!—O how pain-"ful is recollection!—To remember the happy "hours I have enjoyed by *his* ſide—hours "never to return! But I muſt endeavour to "forget them:—how delightful has been my "dream! why was I ever waked out of it? "Yet I ſhould not repine—tho' we *muſt* feel "pangs of regret, when we are deprived of "what conſtituted all our felicity in this "world."

When I had for ſome time given way to a train of melancholy reflections, a new ſet roſe in my mind. I returned fervent thanks to the Almighty for having reſtored Lord Woodford's health, and made a firm reſolution to avoid him, if poſſible, leſt I ſhould be the ſource of any freſh trouble to him. I, then, returned to Mrs. Stevens, who treated me with a greater kindneſs and reſpect than uſual: as ſhe and Lady Woodford had been in private together, I could not help attributing the increaſed civilities I received to her ladyſhip's injunctions.—With thoſe civilities,

civilities, from whatever ſpring they flowed, I could not but be pleaſed; and I ſtrove to return them.—My grateful behaviour ſoon gained me Mrs. Stevens's affection: whenever I was with *her*, I endeavoured to be chearful; when I was alone, I reflected ſo much upon Lord Woodford's amiable qualities, and upon all thoſe tender attentions which had won my heart, that I blamed myſelf ſeverely for having, by my deſertion, impaired his health, and deprived him of happineſs: my ſighs were frequent, and often were my eyes bedimmed with my tears.

In a few days after Lady Woodford's viſit, a genteel young man came to ſee Mrs. Stevens: ſhe called him Mr. Gordon. He ſtaid ſupper; behaved with politeneſs to Mrs. Stevens, but his carriage to me was ſtill more polite. I was very ſenſible of his partiality, yet it diſpleaſed me, becauſe I was neither in humour to receive his diſtinguiſhing *douceurs*, nor to return them.

Mrs. Stevens took notice of the particularity of his behaviour when he was gone.—"Mr. "Gordon is a very agreeable man, I think."

I could not contradict that declaration, without rendering my judgment queſtionable, for moſt women would have been of *her* opinion.

"He is very deſerving of eſteem," added ſhe, "having made an excellent ſon to a father "who was not ſo good as he ought to have "been; but an aunt as amply rewarded him, "by leaving him much more than his father "ſquandered, during his life. Mr. Gordon "has, alſo, a genteel place, and his expecta-"tions are very flattering."

This ſpeech was evidently pointed at *me*, but I confeſs I thought I was, in no ſhape, concerned in it; I, therefore, paid little attention to it. However, in a ſhort time afterwards, Mr. Gordon having been extremely ſtudious to pleaſe me, made a ſerious avowal of his love and regard for me, and was proceeding to give me a minute account of his affairs.

I ſtopped him. "I cannot think of marrying, Sir," replied I, "and beg you would "ſay no more to me upon this ſubject."

The manner in which I uttered my reply, would have been, I imagined, quite ſufficient to hinder a renewal of his addreſſes, but he returned to the charge with great warmth. Finding, however, at laſt, after repeated repulſes, that he gained not the leaſt ground upon me, he altered his behaviour, but continued his viſits to Mrs. Stevens, and attempted, by numberleſs aſſiduities, to render himſelf agreeable to me.—Vain were all his attempts; I thought too much about Lord Woodford to be affected by the carriage of any other man. I fancied, perpetually, that I heard him ſigh, and complain to his mother for having ſeparated us; I fancied that I ſaw him pale, dejected, deſpairing.

While I was mournfully ruminating on paſt ſcenes, and almoſt wiſhing, in the bitterneſs of dependence, that I had never known Lord Woodford, I was informed of his arrival.

I ſtarted: I changed colour: my heart fluttered, as if it would have flown from my boſom to meet him; but when I reflected upon the promiſes I had made, upon the reſolution I had formed, I was ready to die with regret, ſo cutting was my repentance.

I opened

I opened my mouth, ſeveral times, to tell the ſervant that I could not ſee him, but ſhut it before I had courage enough to pronounce words ſo foreign to my heart.

The ſervant, during this conflict in my breaſt, waited: to make it more acute, my lord, himſelf, whoſe pardon I could have, proſtrate at his feet, implored, for having occaſioned any the ſlighteſt uneaſineſs to him, waited for an anſwer. Yet, when I reflected on Lady Woodford's kind regard for me, on the real injury I ſhould do to her family, by encouraging my lord to make her unhappy on *my* account; when I conſidered that I ſhould do my Lord the greateſt harm by not endeavouring to cruſh an inclination which would, if carried too far, expoſe *him* to ridicule; when I conſidered that by acting in ſuch a manner, as to wound his peace, I ſhould only make myſelf doubly diſagreeable in the end, I reſolved to ſtifle my moſt earneſt wiſhes to ſee him: I reſolved to keep my promiſe to Lady Woodford inviolate.—I bade the ſervant tell my lord, that I was very ſorry not to have it in my power to wait upon him in the parlour: adding, that I could ſee nobody.

As ſoon as the ſervant was gone from me with that meſſage, I would have given the world to recall it. I threw myſelf back in the chair, covered my face with my handkerchief, and gave a free courſe to my tears.

A moment's recollection, however, rouzed me. I fancied that my lord would not readily take a denial: and well knowing my own weakneſs; well knowing that if I ſaw him, and liſtened to him, my beſt reſolves would melt away immediately, I roſe haſtily, and not only

bolted the chamber-door, but ran into a cloſet at the fartheſt part of the room, and faſtened myſelf in, that I might not hear his enchanting voice.

I ſtaid in the cloſet till I imagined he had left the houſe: then ringing the bell, I deſired the ſervant to tell Mrs. Stevens that I ſhould be glad of her company.

She came directly. I aſked her, if ſhe had ſeen Lord Woodford.

She anſwered in the affirmative.

"I do not preſs you to tell me what he "ſaid," replied I, "but I ſhould be glad to "hear that he is quite recovered."

"He is pretty well," ſaid ſhe, "conſidering "all things; and now, my dear Fanny," continued ſhe, "let me beſtow all the praiſes "on you, which you, certainly, deſerve. "Never did any woman conduct herſelf with "more diſcretion than you have done in an "affair which required uncommon pru-"dence."

"Do not laviſh encomiums on me, dear "Mrs. Stevens," cried I: "ſo little am I ſa-"tisfied with my behaviour upon this trying "occaſion, that I heartily wiſh I could recall "what is paſt. How could I, who have been "ſo generouſly, ſo tenderly, ſo reſpectfully "treated by Lord Woodford; how could I "refuſe to ſee him? And the firſt time he "came abroad too after his illneſs, an illneſs "which I had, moſt probably, occaſioned! "Was ever any behaviour more unkind, more "ungrateful, more inhumane?"

"We are ſometimes, indeed," replied Mrs. Stevens, "obliged to make uſe of deſperate "remedies; deſperate caſes demand them; "the

" the loſs of a limb is by no means deſirable,
" but to preſerve life, who would not ſubmit
" to an amputation?"

I ſighed, but made no anſwer: I could not bear the ſtinging reflections which crowded into my mind. I wiſhed, very ſincerely, to make Lord Woodford *ſome* amends for the ungrateful part I had acted. At laſt, I recollected that I had never promiſed not to write to him. I, therefore, determined to write immediately: and as ſoon as Mrs. Stevens left me, took up my pen.

To the Right Honourable the Earl of WOODFORD.

THE numberleſs favours conferred upon a poor, friendleſs girl, by the moſt humane, the moſt generous of men, required very different returns from her, than thoſe which he has received.—How was it poſſible for her to refuſe to ſee her amiable benefactor!—Yes, my Lord, I refuſed to ſee you, I ſhut the door againſt you: but when your Lordſhip is acquainted with the motives, by which I was actuated, my conduct, which has, doubtleſs, appeared to you highly exceptionable, will I flatter myſelf, be rather applauded than condemned.—But as I cannot exculpate myſelf from the charge of ingratitude, ſo reaſonably to be levelled at me by your lordſhip, without unfolding the inmoſt receſſes of my heart, I muſt intreat your Lordſhip's particular attention.

When you left me, my Lord, to go to Derbyſhire, the violence of my affection—pardon the expreſſion—made me very reſtleſs, and unhappy; your abſence excluded felicity from my boſom.—I never conſidered, indeed, that of all people I had the leaſt reaſon to imagine you would be always with me. Yet, as you had kindly permitted me to enjoy many hours of your entertaining company, I repined at being deprived of it, even while you went to viſit your relations.—I was ſoon puniſhed for my preſumption. Lady Woodford, provoked, no doubt, to find that an inſignificant creature, engaged ſo much of your time; and concluding, very naturally, from appearances, that I was a girl as deſtitute of virtue, as I am of friends, came and convinced me of my erroneous behaviour, in giving the world room, by living at your Lordſhip's expence, to believe that I really was the character they ſuppoſed me to be.—And as your connection, with a perſon apparently criminal, neceſſarily alarmed Lady Woodford, ſhe came to me to inform herſelf thoroughly of all that had paſſed between us.—I am ſure ſhe felt the ſincereſt pleaſure, a truly maternal ſatisfaction, to find that ſhe had been miſtaken, and that Lord Woodford had not made the ſlighteſt attempt to ſeduce the girl whom he had nobly, and generouſly, taken under his protection—But, my Lord, though my heart has not been violated, my character is irretrievably loſt: and can Lord Woodford, in oppoſition to his worthy family, regardleſs of the duty and affection which he owes to the beſt of mothers, regardleſs too of his own honour and future peace, think

think of making an indiſcreet alliance with a poor friendleſs girl?—*That* girl is too honeſt to ſuffer him to act with ſo much imprudence. —No, my Lord, my reſpect, my eſteem, let me add—for I can add it without a bluſh—my affection for you operate ſufficiently to hinder me from conſenting to your ruin.—I have reaſon to love you, my Lord; I *do* love you; I am not afraid to tell you ſo.—I can, indeed, in no other way, expreſs my gratitude for the numberleſs proofs I have received of your generoſity and regard for me.—I ſhould be covered with ſhame did I not love you, and I will never conſent to your injuring yourſelf, or offending your family, by encouraging the ſmalleſt hope for an union which would make your relations wretched, leſſen you in their eyes, at the ſame time, and put it out of your power to ſhew that compaſſion and tenderneſs, which are due to the amiable daughter of Lady Woodford's friend, who, from her birth and good qualities, from her diſcernment in in perceiving every virtue in you, deſerves your tendereſt attentions.—Think no more, therefore my lord, of a girl who ought to have no pretenſions to a nearer connection with you, becauſe ſhe never can be worthy of it—Should you, from emotions of pity or love, ever have thought ſeriouſly about her, it is incumbent on her to make a vigorous reſiſtance to your deſigns; as your honour will be tarniſhed, your happineſs deſtroyed, by the execution of them. Forget me, my lord.—Suffer me, however to declare how very grateful I am for all the unmerited favours you have conferred on me—To the laſt moment of my life,

my wiſhes, my prayers will be for your felicity.

I am, my lord,
Your lordſhip's moſt obliged
Humble ſervant,
F. OSGOOD.

After having read over the above letter ſeveral times, and as often reſolved to tear it to pieces, not thinking that I had expreſſed the ſentiments of my heart in a proper manner. I at laſt determined to diſpatch it: but I was at a loſs to know by whoſe hands I ſhould convey it to him. As I did not wiſh to have recourſe to any clandeſtine proceedings, I applied to Mrs. Stevens: I acquainted her with the purport of my letter, and deſired her advice.

She heſitated for ſome moments; at length ſhe told me, that if my letter really contained nothing but what I had related to her, ſhe would aſſiſt me in the conveyance of it. "If you propoſe," added ſhe; "to carry on a cor-"reſpondence with my Lord, I will have no "concern in the affair."

I aſſured her, that her apprehenſions were entirely groundleſs; recollecting, however, that my lord might, poſſibly, entertain conjectures ſimilar to Mrs. Stevens's, or might ſeize an opportunity to correſpond with me, I added a poſtſcript, fearful of conſequences, and intreated his lordſhip not to think of making a reply to a letter which required no anſwer, as I had determined to give him no farther trouble in *that*, or in any other way.

When I had ſealed my letter Mrs. Stevens ſent her own maid Kitty with it.

Kitty

Kitty was a ſenſible woman, about eight and twenty, or thirty, and had always treated me with great reſpect; and had always diſcovered an affectionate readineſs to wait on me.

When ſhe had been abſent above two hours, her miſtreſs and I began to wonder at her ſtay: I concluded that Lady Woodford had intercepted my letter: I knew indeed that there was nothing in it unfit for her peruſal, I fancied ſhe might detain it from her ſon. I confeſs, that I was miſerable, about the delivery of it. I very much wiſhed to have him receive from me an apology for my conduct which had, undoubtedly, given him pain, obliging him to harbour an ill opinion of me; I had, it is true, ſo far conquered my inclination as to reſolve to take no ſteps to promote my own happineſs at the expence of *his* honour; yet I did not think there was any neceſſity for me to render myſelf odious to him.

The various reflections which followed each other, in a ſucceſſion in my mind, drove compoſure from it.—Kitty's return, tho' moſt welcome was her appearance, threw me into a violent agitation. She returned with a letter in her hand from Lord Woodford.

An anſwer from *him* was a bleſſing I had not expected. Great was the flutter of my ſpirits upon the occaſion; but my ſenſations were rather pleaſing than painful.

I ſnatched the letter eagerly from Kitty's hand, and while I was ſo employed, *felt* that I ſhould never obtain a victory over the tender paſſion which had taken poſſeſſion of my heart.

When I had ſeized the letter, I could not help earneſtly examining Kitty's face, to ſee

if

if I could find out, in her features, whad had paſſed, relating to *me*, at Lord Woodford's. *She*, at the ſame time, looked as if ſhe had a great deal to communicate, but was unwilling to hinder me from reading the reply ſhe had brought me.

As Mrs. Stevens had quitted the room, and as I thought I might not have, *that* day, another opportunity to ſpeak to Kitty in private, I roſe, and, having faſtened my chamber-door, to prevent interruption, ſaid to her, "How "came you by this letter, Kitty?"

"My Lord gave it me, madam;" replied ſhe.

"You ſaw him then—how does he look? "What did he ſay?"

Eagerly were thoſe queſtions articulated.

"He looked pale, and very much out of "order, madam, when I was firſt admitted "to him, but he grew better before I came "away."

This particular reply excited my curioſity, and I deſired her to relate every thing that had paſſed; ſhe gratified it in the following words:

"When I delivered your letter to my lord's "gentleman, whom they called Mr. Cowley; "he aſked me from whom I came. I told "him that the letter would inform his lord-"ſhip.—Undoubtedly it will, ſaid he; but "as my lord will aſk me the ſame queſtion, I "would rather be able to give him the de-"manded information immediately.—I come "from Miſs Oſgood, replied I—He looked "pleaſed, I thought, at the mention of your "name; he then conducted me into a parlour, "and deſired me to ſit down; he then took

"the

" the letter, and went up ſtairs. He returned
" in a moment with the letter unopened, and
" ſaid that my lord bade me take it back.—I
" looked diſappointed, madam," continued
" the good natured girl—" becauſe I knew
" what you would feel. I was very unwilling
" to leave the houſe before my lord had open-
" ed the letter, and yet I judged it was not *my*
" place to ſay any thing.—Mr. Cowley ſeemed
" to be as much diſſatisfied as I was; at leaſt
" I imagined ſo, and I was therefore ſtill more
" deſirous of ſpeaking. I thought, indeed,
" at the ſame time, that I ought not to take
" ſuch a liberty, and yet I could not bring
" myſelf to leave the houſe. I lingered, and
" caſt my eyes, firſt on the letter, and then on
" Mr. Cowley, who appeared to be in no
" hurry to part with me.—While we both
" ſtood, undetermined as it were, how to act,
" a violent ringing made Mr. Cowley hurry
" up ſtairs. He ſtayed ſome time, and I re-
" ſolved not to ſtir till he came down again.
" —At laſt I heard two people upon the ſtairs,
" and ſoon afterwards ſomebody cried, in a
" peeviſh voice, and in a haſty manner,
" Where is ſhe?"—" Here, my lord," repli-
" ed Mr. Cowley, opening the parlour-door.
" —I then ſaw my lord: he came in with a
" diſordered countenance. " From whom do
" you come?" ſaid he, from Miſs Oſgood,
" anſwered I, holding out the letter, and
" longed to add ſomething to make him open
" it, but I was afraid you would be angry.—
" 'Tis very well," ſaid he, with a kind of af-
" fected haughtineſs, " I have nothing to ſay
" to Miſs Oſgood; you may tell her ſo."—He
" then turned his back, and was going to
" leave

" leave the room. There was no time to loſe,
" and therefore I haſtened to ſay, I ſhall be
" ſorry, my lord, to carry Miſs Oſgood ſuch
" an anſwer from your lordſhip; I am ſure it
" will hurt her prodigiouſly, and her ſpirits
" are very low at preſent. He looked earneſt-
" ly at me, rather ſternly, at my impertin-
" nence, I ſuppoſe: he then took three or
" four turns, haſtily, up and down the room,
" but as he had not commanded me to depart,
" I remained ſtanding in a reſpectful manner,
" with the letter in my hand. At length,
" turning ſhort upon me, " There muſt be
" ſome miſtake, child, ſaid he, Miſs Oſgood
" can have nothing to ſay to me: I am but
" lately come from her houſe, and ſhe refuſed
" to ſee me; therefore you are, I tell you,
" under a miſtake."—I believe *not*, my lord,
" replied I, and I fancy your lordſhip will
" find very ſatisfactory reaſons for her beha-
" viour in this letter.—" You are, then, ac-
" quainted with the contents of it?" ſaid he, in
" a milder tone. No, my lord; but I know
" Miſs Oſgood too well to believe that ſhe would
" do any thing your lordſhip does not ap-
" prove of, without being able to give a good
" reaſon for it.—A half ſmile roſe in my lord's
" face—" Miſs Oſgood is obliging to *you*, I
" ſuppoſe, or you would not ſpeak ſo warmly
" in her praiſe." She is good to every body,
" my lord, replied I, with whom ſhe has any
" thing to do; every body who knows her
" muſt love her.—My lord turned away his
" face, and fetched a deep ſigh; then, advan-
" cing briſkly towards me, ſaid, " Come,
" give me the letter: I will open it, ſince you
" ſay there is an apology for her conduct in
" it"

" it."—He broke the ſeals in a hurry; his " hands trembled, he changed colour while " he read, lifted up his eyes three or four " times, took out his handkerchief, and wiped " his face: then, turning to me again, " I " am obliged to you, ſaid he; pray ſit down, " and accept of this for your trouble," put- " ting a guinea into my hand—" tell me your " name, child, and ſtay till I have written an " anſwer. I curtſied and thanked him; but, " believe me, madam, I was a thouſand " times more pleaſed at his promiſing to an- " ſwer your letter, than with the money he " gave me."

Here Kitty ſtopped: I was extremely impatient to read the letter ſhe had brought for me, yet I wiſhed, with not a little eagerneſs, to be acquainted with every particular circumſtance relating to my lord's behaviour.

" He went up, madam," continued Kitty, " and ſtaid about half an hour, during which, " Mr. Cowley came in and chatted with me: " he told me, that he was glad to hear me " ſay, I had been ſent by Miſs Oſgood, be- " cauſe he was well aſſured, that his lordſhip " was very unhappy upon *her* account; ad- " ding that he was ſo good a maſter, all his " ſervants were ſorry to ſee him uneaſy, and " wiſhed he might never have a worſe lady.— " We were then interrupted by the arrival of " my lord, with a letter in his hand; he " deſired me to carry it to you, gave me ano- " ther guinea, and was very inquiſitive about " your health, intreating me to take the " greateſt care of you, and bidding Cowley to " let me out."

This

This account, you may be ſure, could not be diſagreeable to me: I thanked Kitty for her care and attention, promiſed never to forget her, and told her alſo, that I was glad my lord had ſo handſomely rewarded her, for her readineſs to be ſerviceable to me.

She made many grateful acknowledgments, and left me to open my letter.—I unfolded it immediately, and read the following lines;

To Miſs Osgood.

AFTER the racking diſquietude which I have endured on account of *your* abſence, my dear Fanny, what tranſports do I feel on finding that you ſtill love me, and that it is to your love alone, I am to attribute the behaviour which raiſed a little reſentment, I own, in me; but you have, by acquainting me with your motives, removed it. Enamoured as I was with you, how could I bear to be diſmiſſed from you, and in a manner too which induced me to believe that you had quite given me up?—Your dear letter, though it was ſome time before I could prevail on myſelf to open it, gave a new turn to my ideas, filled me with new ſenſations, and fixed you the ſovereign miſtreſs of my heart.—Yes, Fanny, you are my ſoul's ſupreme joy, and I am now more firmly attached to you than ever —Your many excellent qualities firſt recommended you to my attention; and they are, indeed, ſufficient to over-balance all your deficiences with regard to rank and fortune. No longer, therefore, imagine that the ſuperiority on *my* ſide renders me blind to your ineſtimable merit: compared with the virtues by which you are ſo eminently diſtinguiſhed, rank and

and fortune are of no conſideration: no longer perſiſt in refuſing the ſon to flatter the pride of the mother, the only failing ſhe ever diſcovered.—Time, my Fanny, and a farther acquaintance with you will, I dare aver, reconcile her to an alliance, concerning which ſhe is, at preſent, ſo much diſturbed. Do not, my deareſt girl, ſuppoſe that I will ever forſake you: be aſſured you are abſolutely neceſſary to my happineſs; be aſſured alſo, that I only wait for the completion of it, till I can prevail on my mother to conſent, with a good grace, to a meaſure which will I am perſuaded, conſtitute *her* felicity, as well as enſure *mine*. Some people cannot, without much difficulty, be brought to approve of the very meaſures by which their own happineſs would be promoted: ſuch people muſt be managed with addreſs; the removal of their prejudices muſt be artfully, and gradually attempted: and you may depend upon my taking the ſteps moſt likely to ſucceed, for the extinction of all the little narrow notions cheriſhed by Lady Woodford, which make her ſo averſe to an alliance with you.—With pleaſure ſhall I undertake the taſk, and I am ſanguine enough to hope I ſhall prove ſucceſsful.—Think no more, then, my deareſt girl, of giving me up; nor call yourſelf friendleſs: I am, and ever will be, your ſincere friend, your fond, your faithful lover. Do not deny yourſelf any reaſonable indulgence that your fortune will admit of, for you are fairly entitled to the annual ſum of three hundred pounds; and that ſum you ſhall regularly receive in four quarterly payments, and you may reſide whereever you pleaſe. However, if Mrs. Stevens, with whom I am acquainted, behaves with propriety,

priety, and makes herſelf agreeable to you, had you not better remain with *her*, than leave her to live with ſtrangers? From her, ſince you actually, prohibit a correſpondence between us, for the preſent, I can ſometimes hear about your health. My mother, alſo, will, in all probability, be more pleaſed with your continuance with her friend, as ſhe will, by your remaining with her, have an opportunity to ſee and hear with what diſcretion you conduct yourſelf: your diſcretion will, doubtleſs, have great weight with her, and render her the more ready to compleat our happineſs: I ſay *our* happineſs, becauſe I ſtill flatter myſelf that my dear Fanny can taſte no real felicity without

Her ever ſincere,
And affectionate
WOODFORD.

It is not poſſible for me, my dear friend, to tell you into what tranſports of delight this letter threw me.—I read it over and over ſeveral times with freſh ſatisfaction; a ſatisfaction as ſolid, as it was pure: I had all the reaſon in the world to believe, from this letter, that my lord would reſerve himſelf for me; I therefore, thought I had nothing to do but to wait for him with patience, and to endeavour to behave in ſuch a manner, as to win his mother to my intereſt, whenever I happened to ſee her.

Lady Woodford called on me now and then; and brought me, one day, a fifty pound note

"Fanny," ſaid ſhe with a good humoured ſmile, "do you want money? I promiſed, you "know, to ſupply you."

"I thank

"I thank you, madam," replied I, "but I "cannot ſpend what I have, in the manner "I live."

"What do you mean, child?" cried ſhe, with a look full of ſurprize.

"I cannot ſpend three hundred a year, without being very extravagant."

"Three hundred a year!"

"You know, madam, that my lord ſettled "that ſum upon me for my life."

"Yes; but you forget that I told you that "no young woman could honourably be ſub-"ſiſted by a man, without being married to "him.—You agreed to my ſentiments, at the "time I acquainted you with them, and I, "therefore, really imagined that you had re-"jected any farther aſſiſtance from my ſon."

I looked abaſhed, but replied, "That as I "had not ſeen my lord ſince, I had not met "with an opportunity to inform him of my "thoughts upon that ſubject."

"There is no occaſion for your ſeeing him," anſwered ſhe, eagerly; "you have only to re-"fuſe the acceptance of any money from him, "when it is offered to you: there is no other "way for you to get rid of a gift which is "forced upon you againſt your inclination:— "A gift you will no longer want, as I ſhall "amply provide for you till you are married. "Gordon, with whom I am acquainted, tells "me that you do not like him; I am ſorry you "have an averſion to him, as he is young, agree-"able, and very ſuitable to you."

I made my acknowledgments to her ladyſhip in the moſt reſpectful terms, for her good wiſhes, but aſſured her, that I had no thoughts of marrying.

"I hope

"I hope you do not ſtill think of my ſon," added ſhe, haſtily.

"Not improperly, my lady," anſwered I, with my face glowing like fire.

I believe ſhe did not much like that reply. Having again inſiſted upon my not receiving any farther ſupplies from my lord, ſhe left the bank note with me and went away.

For ſome time I heard nothing of my lord; I longed to know ſomething about him. Yet I never mentioned him to Mrs. Stevens, nor yet to Kitty by way of enquiring after him.

My life was a very dull one.—The day roſe, the night came with indifference: the hours crept heavily along; nothing gave a chearful turn to my ideas. I ſtill ſecretly pined for lord Woodford's ſociety: I found Mrs. Stevens to be a good ſort of woman, indeed, but a dreaming companion. She ſaw, I fancy, that we were not in the leaſt entertaining to each other: the diſcovery, however, did not raiſe any emotions of diſguſt in her againſt me.—Her behaviour, in conſequence of it, ſtrongly evinced the natural ſweetneſs of her diſpoſition.

While I was in this ſituation, winter arrived. During a little converſation one evening, about diverſions, Mrs. Stevens laid down her work—we were both engaged with our needles—and looking earneſtly at me ſaid, "You have undoubtedly ſeen ſeveral plays? Which do you like beſt, tragedies or comedies?"

I told her, that I could not anſwer that queſtion properly, as I had not ſeen either the one or the other.

"No?" cried ſhe, we will go then the next "time Garrick acts."

I made

I made but a ſlight reply—I was quite indifferent about it. However, ſhe over-perſuaded me, and we took a coach one night to Drury-lane. Her intention was to ſit in the gallery, that ſhe might not be known, but as the houſe was full before our arrival, and as we could not, poſſibly, think of getting a place, but by puſhing thro' a monſtrous crowd, which quite frightened me, we were going to return to our coach, to the great mortification of Mrs. Stevens—when we met a gentleman very handſomely, but not full dreſſed, who had all the appearance of a man of faſhion. He fixed his eyes on me, tho' my hat was pretty much over my face, and ſaid, "Is there no room "ladies?"

"None, Sir, replied Mrs. Stevens; at leaſt "we dare not venture to ſee if there is any."

"To what part of the houſe do you wiſh to "go?" ſaid he, with eagerneſs.

"To the gallery," replied Mrs. Stevens.

"The gallery muſt undoubtedly be full," ſaid he, "but I dare ſay I can get you into one "of the green-boxes."

Mrs. Stevens heſitated. She looked at *me*. I was equally ignorant and indifferent about the green-boxes; I was quite indifferent, indeed, about the play itſelf.

The gentleman, ſeeing her embarraſſed, ſaid, "While you are heſitating, madam, you will "loſe every opportunity: give me leave to aſ-"ſiſt you."

I happened to be neareſt to him: he took my hand: my countenance diſcovered how little deſirous I was of taking any ſtep to procure what ſo many were toiling to obtain, but as Mrs. Stevens intreated me to go on, I permitted him

him to drag me through the crowd, altogether inattentive to every thing. At laſt we ſeated ourſelves very commodiouſly in one of the above-mentioned boxes. The gentleman placed Mrs. Stevens on one ſide of me, and himſelf on the other. She reached over me ſeveral times to make him acknowledgments for the trouble he had taken: during the articulation of thoſe acknowledgments I ſat ſilent, being inclined to look at the houſe, and to obſerve the company, &c. &c. My conductor, ſurpriſed at my ſilence, ſaid at length, "Sure, "madam, Mr. Garrick is not happy enough "to rank you among his numerous admirers, as "you ſhew no deſire to give your attention to "a man, for the ſight of whom upon the ſtage "thouſands take an infinite deal of pains."

"As I never ſaw Mr. Garrick, Sir, my "eaſineſs about him is not to be wondered at."

He gave his aſſent to that anſwer, adding, "That he ſhould receive a great deal of ſatiſ-"faction, in taking notice of the pleaſure "which the appearance of ſo maſterly an "actor would afford me, and that he ſhould "ever think himſelf uncommonly happy in "having been, in the ſlighteſt degree, inſtru-"mental to ſo much delight."

I was ſilent. The curtain drew up. The play was Jane Shore.—Never, I believe, was any creature more intereſted in any theatrical performance.—I felt the force of every line almoſt as keen as if real ſcenes had been preſented to my view. I was particularly affected by the miſery which Jane Shore had brought upon herſelf, by yielding to a commerce which I plainly ſaw could not be enjoyed or defended, as virtue was not the foundation of it. Alicia's ravings

ravings filled me with horror, but as her diſtraction was occaſioned by her outrageous jealouſy, on finding her infamous pleaſures interrupted, her ravings did not touch me ſo much as the penitential effuſions of the unhappy *Jane*. I felt her exquiſite diſtreſs the more ſtrongly, by conſidering that I might have been in the ſame dangerous ſituation, by living with the man whom I loved. The performance of this play made me ſhudder to think of what had paſſed relating to myſelf. I wept myſelf almoſt blind, regardleſs of every body about me: tho' the gentleman who had taken ſo much pains to place me, ſeemed to attach himſelf entirely to me. He applauded my ſenſibility, but while he beſtowed encomiums upon it, he diſcovered ſome fears leſt I ſhould, by given way to my tears, make my head ache.

I aſſured him, though I had ſhed a great many tears in my life, I had never perfectly known till then what was meant by a luxury of ſorrow.

He looked at me, as ſoon as I had uttered theſe few words, as if he had never ſeen a human creature before: he appeared to be, at once, aſtoniſhed and delighted; yet he ſhewed both with ſuch a delicacy, that I could not, juſtly, be offended at his behaviour.

When the play was over, he carefully handed us out, procured us a coach, and begged he might be permitted to call and aſk us how we did ſometimes.

His requeſt was addreſſed to us both with his lips, but his looks were directed to *me* alone.

Mrs. Stevens heſitated again.

" My

"My name is Sheffield," continued he; "I live in Pall-Mall, and hope to have the "honour to ſee you at my houſe when we "are better acquainted."

Mrs Stevens, who had not appeared to be quite eaſy with our new friend, began to brighten up at this intelligence. While we were going home, ſhe ſaid, "How remarkably "lucky we have been in falling into ſuch good "hands! Mr. Sheffield has an exceeding good "fortune, and is of a good family."

"I thought you told me juſt now," repli-"ed I drily, "that you did not know him."

"I did *not* know him," anſwered ſhe, till "he mentioned his name; and then I preſent-"ly recollected that I had heard a hundred "handſome things of him, tho' I had never "ſeen him before. Mr. Sheffield, however, was laid aſide, and our converſation turned upon the play which had, indeed, ſo totally engaged my thoughts, that I could not attend to Mrs Stevens upon any other ſubject.

The next day Mr. Sheffield made his appearance: he had an elegant perſon, an eaſy and polite addreſs: he ſeemed to be perfectly acquainted with the world, yet there was a pleaſing ſimplicity in his manners, which is infinitely more attractive than than that parade with which ſome pompous people endeavour to prejudice you in favour of their underſtandings. He converſed upon many entertaining ſubjects, and chiefly addreſſed himſelf to me, without affecting to make me ſenſible that I particularly engaged his attention. After a pretty long firſt viſit he left us, but invited himſelf to drink tea with us the following day.

He

He came; and the time paſſed away very pleaſantly, becauſe his converſation was ſprightly, and amuſing: his whole behaviour too was ſo entirely unreſtrained, that we converſed with him as freely as if he had been an acquaintance, or rather an intimate friend. Next to Lord Woodford, he was the moſt agreeable man I had ever met with. I did not, however, acquaint Mrs. Stevens with my private opinion of him.

Lady Woodford called again to ſee me—for ſome time we were not by ourſelves: ſhe treated me with more tenderneſs than uſual. I aſked no queſtions about my lord, but I concluded, from *her* chearfulneſs, that he was well. She was, I found, ſtill more pleaſed with me on account of my forbearing to mention him.

Soon after *her* departure, Mr. Sheffield came in. He brought me ſome new books of the tender kind; yet they were genteel, moral, and entertaining. From *that* time he continued to ſupply me with every new production fit for my peruſal, as ſoon as it was publiſhed. This polite carriage of his naturally produced an intimacy between us; an intimacy much deſired, apparently, by him, and, I confeſs, not diſagreeable to me. Deprived of Lord Woodford's converſation, I had not met with any perſon whoſe ſociety was in the leaſt ſuitable to my taſte, till Mr. Sheffield fell under my notice. I could not help ſeeing that he was partial to me, yet in no ſhape was the lover viſible.—Mr. Sheffield was ſtudiouſly aſſiduous to make himſelf agreeable to me in every reſpect, and I treated him in the manner I thought he deſerved, like a well-bred man,

who was of an obliging diſpoſition, and who would be diſappointed if his endeavours to pleaſe had not been handſomely received. Lord Woodford was the ſole poſſeſſor of my heart, but Mr. Sheffield was entitled to a conſiderable ſhare of my eſteem.

By this kind of behaviour on both ſides, our familiarity increaſed. We chatted upon the books he lent me; ſome of them were dramatic, and naturally gave riſe to reflections on the ſtage. He frequently told me how much he was ſurpriſed that I, with ſo true a a taſte for theatrical repreſentations—thoſe were his flattering expreſſions—went not oftner to ſee them. "Tho' indeed," added he, one day, "if every tragedy affects you as *Jane* "*Shore* did, I don't know whether, out of a "regard for your health, I ought to wiſh you "to be preſent at many exhibitions in the tragic "ſtyle."

I anſwered with a freedom to which my growing intimacy with him had, imperceptibly, accuſtomed me.—"Every tragedy, I ſuppoſe, "Sir, is not ſo deep as that I ſaw the other "night."

"There are many tragedies in our language, "with different fables, and full as affecting," replied he.

"To *me*, Sir, there cannot, I am ſure, be "a more intereſting tragedy than that which "I have already ſeen. A woman, whoſe "peace of mind is deſtroyed by her having "given the reins to a tender paſſion, is a "pitiable object; and ſhe excites one's pity "ſtill more, if the ill-treatment ſhe meets with "from her ſeducer, not only fills her with "the moſt cutting remorſe, but drives her "to diſtraction."

I believe

I believe I coloured while I ſpoke thoſe words: I, certainly, felt diſconcerted.

" You ſpeak feelingly, Miſs Oſgood," ſaid he; " but I will allow that the object you have " mentioned is truly deſerving of compaſſion: " every man of the leaſt ſenſibility muſt be af- " fected with *Alicia*'s ſituation; — and yet," added he, after a little pauſe, " a woman who " has never been in *her* ſituation, need not, " methinks, feel upon the occaſion more than " ſuch a man."

" A woman," replied I, with my face ſtill in a glow, " who has been in danger, cannot " but ſigh at another's ruin, tho' ſhe may ex- " ult, at the ſame time, at her own eſcape."

" Are *you* that woman?" ſaid he, tenderly. " Pardon me, Miſs Oſgood; I do not intend " to be impertinent, but I feel myſelf con- " cerned in every thing relating to you."

As I looked upon this ſpeech only as an effuſion of gallantry, I replied, " Moſt women, " Sir, have, I ſuppoſe, been in ſome parts of " their lives thrown into trying ſituations, " and when I hear of the ſufferings of any " of *my* ſex, for an indiſcreet confidence in " any of *yours*, I ſhudder to think of the " precipice from which I have been, provi- " dentially, ſaved."

He looked at me very earneſtly, anxiouſly, indeed, while I ſpoke, and then ſaid, " A " woman cannot be in a trying ſituation, un- " leſs ſhe loves the man who ſtudies to inſinu- " ate himſelf into her favour; in that caſe, " 'tis true, little reſiſtance is to be expected."

I told him that I was of his opinion, and that no woman could be in danger if ſhe was

not too ſenſible of her lover's merit, or the conſtancy of his attachment to her.

" You have, doubtleſs, been ſenſible of " ſuch an attachment," cried he, eagerly, " or you could not ſpeak ſo feelingly upon the " ſubject."

This reply was too home; it embarraſſed me extremely: however I had addreſs enough to extricate myſelf out of the perplexity in which I was involved, by ſaying, that when a converſation became particular, we were prevented from delivering our thoughts with freedom.

" I ſtand corrected, madam," anſwered he, with a graceful bow; " but tho' I may have " been guilty of a piece of impertinence, it " is my ſincere wiſh never to give you a mo- " ment's diſquiet.—I wiſh, indeed, moſt ar- " dently to have it in *my* power to increaſe " your felicity, hopeleſs as I am of ever hav- " ing my wiſhes gratified."

The entrance of Mrs. Stevens put an end to this converſation, though it occaſioned a ſlight change, I thought, in Mr. Sheffield's countenance, and behaviour. He looked more ſerious, he appeared more reſtleſs, more diſſatisfied than uſual. As the change I obſerved in him, however, did not affect *me*, I only amuſed myſelf with his aſſiduities about me, and his numberleſs little efforts to give me pleaſure. —Finding that I began to grow grave, he propoſed a party to a comedy, in order to make me chearful. — " Comedies," ſaid he, " are moral pieces as well as tragedies, and " they are more agreeable: in them, if well " written, we ſee vice and folly ſatirized as " they ought to be. Among our firſt rate

" comedies

" comedies, the *Conſcious Lovers* may be " reckoned, though I think there are many " exceptionable parts in it; yet I believe you " will be pleaſed at the repreſentation of it."

Mrs. Stevens, who ſat by, and who was very fond of plays, ſpoke ſo highly of the laſt-mentioned piece, that Mr. Sheffield redoubled his perſuaſions to induce me to go to it, and nothing remained to be ſettled but the part of the houſe in which we were to be ſeated. " We muſt ſit either in the ſide-boxes, or " green-boxes," ſaid Mr. Sheffield.

I, immediately, declared for the leaſt public ſituation.

Turning to me, with a very particular look he ſaid, " Why ſhould ſo much beauty be " concealed? You have not the ſmalleſt ſhare " of the vanity of your ſex, or you have " very ſingular reaſons for hiding a perſon " which muſt give the higheſt pleaſure to all " who behold it."

I received this compliment meerly as a compliment, and the ſound of it died away as ſoon as I had heard of it.—However, Mr. Sheffield, finding that I choſe the green-boxes, ſent directly to ſecure places; and only begged that I would condeſcend to go without a hat or bonnet.

This requeſt was, I thought, an odd one; but as Mrs. Stevens joined with him. I complied, though againſt my inclination, and my judgment.

Mr. Sheffield's chariot carried Mr. Stevens and me.—A chair had taken *him* firſt, that he might be ready to aſſiſt us in getting to our places.

As I had not now the appearance of a ſpot entirely new to me to diſſipate my attention, I liſtened to the entertaining chat of Mr. Sheffield with much ſatisfaction; and as he had a very good taſte in muſick, I applauded thoſe pieces which ſeemed to ſtrike him moſt: by ſo doing, I pleaſed him not a little: I never ſaw him in ſuch ſpirits. The converſations between Bevil and Indiana ſoon became ſo intereſting, that I was all ear to them: I fancied Bevil Lord Woodford, and an Indiana myſelf. Their diſtreſſes were, to me, ſtill more affecting than thoſe of *Jane Shore* (though really infinitely inferior to them) becauſe they ſeemed to be ſimilar to my own.

I was, certainly, as poor as Indiana; I was as deeply in love, I had depended as much upon my lover, and was as doubtful whether I ſhould ever be united to him.—In one reſpect, indeed, I was happier than Indiana: *ſhe* was diſtracted with apprehenſions with regard to her lover's affection for her, but *I* was bleſt in knowing that Lord Woodford *had* loved me, and in believing that he loved me, at that inſtant, as tenderly as ever

While I was thus employed iu drawing compariſons between myſelf and the heroine of the play, Mr. Sheffield made an obſervation which occaſioned me to turn my head in order to anſwer him, as it was particularly worthy of my notice. On turning round, I ſaw Lord Woodford. He was behind me, leaning forward to hear what I ſaid, not being very near me.

The moment he caught my eyes, he drew back with an air of inconceiveable diſguſt, and diſdain.

Having

Having felt the moſt agreeable ſurprize, the livelieſt joy, the tendereſt emotions at the ſight of him, I was ſo ſtruck at the ſudden, and diſcouraging alteration in his features, that I became as pale as death.

Sheffield, who had cloſely watched me, immediately ſeized my hand, preſſed it tenderly, and aſked me if I was not well, taking out of his pocket, at the ſame time, an *eau de luce* bottle, and offering it to me; for my lord's indifference had ſo much affected me, that I was ready to faint.

On my making no reply, he grew extremely officious.—I was not capable of making any reſiſtance to his attentions, but my eyes were perpetually wandering in ſearch of my lord, who left the box with precipitation. I, then, unable to attend to any thing, grew very uneaſy. My lord, by his departure, without ſpeaking to me, without taking the leaſt notice of me, pierced my heart. I could no longer ſuppreſs the torturing emotions which I endured, yet was afraid of making them publick.—The conflict was ſo ſevere, that I abſolutely fainted in Mr. Sheffield's arms. *He*, whoſe vigilance was exceſſive, caught me, and ſaved me from falling. A few ſlight exclamations of ſurprize and concern uttered by him, and Mrs. Stevens, upon the occaſion, brought back my lord, I ſuppoſe, for when I opened my eyes, I ſaw, while I reſted on Sheffield's boſom, my lord, nearer to me than he was before: yet, inſtead of advancing to aſſiſt me, inſtead of expreſſing the leaſt concern at my indiſpoſition, he frowned, bit his lips, and looked with a kind of gloomy ſulkineſs which made me tremble, beginning to move towards

the box-door a ſecond time.—His feet were directed towards the door; his eyes were ſtill fixed on *me*, but his looks afforded me no ſatisfaction, for he appeared to be greatly diſturbed, and exceedingly diſpleaſed with me.—Unable, at laſt, to ſupport his neglect, weak, and half-recovered as I was, unable to let him go from me, without endeavouring to learn the cauſe of his cruel behaviour, I raiſed my languid head, and with a faultering voice, ſaid, while my heart was almoſt rent aſunder, "Will you not ſpeak to me, my lord?"

Inſtead of making the reply which I expected, he turned, haſtily, from me, and, again, quitted the box.

This was too much: I was not only ſeverely diſappointed, I was alſo overwhelmed with affliction.—I exclaimed, in agony, "He is loſt "—gone for ever—I am undone."

Mr. Sheffield, who began to grow extremely anxious about me, ſaid, with a great deal of tenderneſs in his manner, that it would be better for me, as I was ſo uneaſy, to leave the houſe.

I readily cloſed with his propoſal.—I was, indeed, very much diſordered—I was more like a mad woman, than a rational being, and when I aſked myſelf, while we were going home, whether I ought to be ſo afflicted on my Lord's account, as I had given him up; my heart replied, that I had never meant, by giving him up, to offend him, but to do him a real ſervice, for which he ought rather to eſteem me more than ever. Beſides, had he not told me in his anſwer to my letter, that I ſhould *nat* give him up? had he not aſſured me,

me, that he would ever be my friend, and lover? and was his behaviour to me at our meeting, after ſo long an abſence, when I appeared to be dying, dying in conſequence of his chilling neglect, the behaviour of even a friend?

Such were my reflections while I was in Mr. Sheffield's chariot with Mrs. Stevens, who aſked me twenty queſtions in a breath, and ſaid that it was a pity I had not been able to conceal the diſturbance I felt at the unexpected appearance of my lord, in ſo publick a place. "But "I hope," continued ſhe, "as you have now "been treated by him in ſo mortifying a "manner, you will think no more about him; "and I am very ſure you may do as well, if "not better, in another place."

I made no reply to this jargon, for ſo I conſidered it.—I could only anſwer her with my ſighs, and with tears, which flowed faſt; ſo faſt, that I was ſcarce able to ſee Mr. Sheffield, when he came to the ſide of the carriage on its ſtopping, who lifted me out.—When he had conducted me into the houſe, he placed me on a ſopha, ſat down by me, and taking my hand, intreated me to endeavour to compoſe myſelf, if poſſible, as he was certain that by immoderate grief, I ſhould injure my health. "Be- "ſides," added he, "you are not yet ſure "that you have reaſon to be ſo uneaſy: ap- "pearances, on all ſides are deceitful: I will "not intrude upon your hour of retiring to "night, as you have been ſo much fluttered, "but I ſhall hope, to-morrow, when you are "a little more calm, to be able to offer ſome "conſolation to you; to weaken the weight

" of your ſorrow, if not entirely to remove " it."

This was, indeed, the voice of comfort: I greedily availed myſelf of it; I intreated him to remain with me, as I could not think of taking any reſt, and to communicate what he had to diſcloſe before his departure for the evening. I could not, however, prevail on him to ſtay with me.—" Only be compoſed," replied he, preſſing my hand; " you are diſtreſſed " at Lord Woodford's behaviour.—You think " him changed with regard to you.—Now, I, " too plainly perceive that he is *not*. You may " be aſſured that he loves you more than ever. " A man never thinks it worth his while to be " angry with a woman who is an object of " indifference in his eyes—I cannot enter into " particulars to night—only give credit to this " aſſurance of mine; if you find me miſtaken, " never believe me again."

With theſe words he hurried towards the door.—Pale and red, alternately, aſtoniſhed at what he had juſt declared, and impatient to come to an explanation, trembling too, from terror and deſpair, fain would I have detained him by the hand with which he held mine, but he broke from me, though he ſeemed to diſcover a melancholy kind of pleaſure, at the ſame time, at my wiſhing him to ſtay with me: I ſhould not have been ſo deſirous of the continuance of his company, had I not hoped to hear Lord Woodford's extraordinary conduct accounted for, though I could not help wondering at his being able to explain it.—Mr. Sheffield's converſation was, in truth, ſo much more ſoothing and ſatisfactory than Mrs. Stevens's, that I almoſt wiſhed to put him in her

her place, as he had exceedingly raiſed my curioſity.

Having reſiſted all Mrs. Stevens's ſolicitations, when ſupper came, I retired to my apartment, and ſpent the night in tears, which were accompanied with a thouſand idle conjectures concerning my lord's carriage, and as many apologies for it.—Never did I, with ſo much ardor, wiſh for the return of morning.

I roſe before any of the family were ſtirring, and endeavoured to compoſe myſelf ſufficiently to ſit down to breakfaſt with Mrs. Stevens. I could not however, ſwallow a morſel.

Juſt when the breakfaſt things were taken away, Mr. Sheffield entered the room. Mrs. Stevens, as ſoon as the firſt compliments were over, left us together.

"I have been very impatient to ſee you, Sir," ſaid I, to him, in anſwer to an enquiry after my health.

"How flattering would that ſpeech have "been," replied he, "did I not know that "your impatience was occaſioned by your cu-"rioſity with regard to Lord Woodford."

I bluſhed, I hung my head, and by ſo doing confeſſed that he was no ſtranger to the emotions of my heart.—To be honeſt, I ſhould have contrived to have been abſent, had not my curioſity prompted me to have an interview with him; for though I eſteemed Mr. Sheffield, and liked his converſation, I had not the leaſt idea of loving him: and I had, for ſome time fancied that he both wiſhed, and expected to find me very ſtrongly prepoſſeſſed in his favour.

"I have

"I have already diſconcerted you," ſaid he; "and I fear that I have ſome queſtions to "aſk, which you will not be quite willing to "anſwer; but how can I be certain that I am "right, unleſs you give me ſome directing "clue?"

"No, no," cried I, ſtill more embarraſſed, "ſay every thing you think proper, and I will "tell you if you are right afterwards."

"I muſt ſay, then, that I am grieved to "death to be obliged to tell you that you love "lord Woodford."

"I am afraid my partiality for Lord Wood-"ford has been but too clearly diſcovered," replied I, colouring exceſſively.

"And it is clear to me, that it was from the "exceſs of love alone, he gave you the diſ-"quiet which you felt; he was, I will venture "to declare, not leſs diſquieted at the ſight "of you, though he diſcovered the ſituation "of his mind in a different manner."

"But how is it poſſible that you ſhould "know all this?" anſwered I, in no ſmall confuſion.

"I know this and much more," replied he, "yet there are circumſtances with which I am "not acquainted: could I, however, be ac-"quainted with them, I might be ſerviceable "to you, by the diſcloſure of others, of which "you want to be informed. By favouring me "therefore, with the whole detail of your "connection with Lord Woodford, you will "take the ſureſt way to find out what you "wiſh to know."

I looked down, and heſitated. I could not bring myſelf to relate all my lord's affairs, and my own, to a man with whom I had only a

ſlight

ſlight acquaintance, to a man who was not, I thought, entitled to ſuch a confidence: but when I reflected upon the politeneſs, and propriety of his carriage ſince our firſt accidental meeting, I found myſelf almoſt tempted to truſt him: yet, on re-conſideration, I was ſure I could not enter upon the requeſted detail.—I felt myſelf unequal to the taſk, and was utterly unable to open my heart to a man who evidently beheld me with looks particularly tender. I, therefore, replied, "that Lord Woodford "had once been inſtrumental to my deliverance "from the greateſt of all misfortunes, but "that I had no connection with him at all:" adding however, "that I ſhould be very glad "to hear he did not entertain an ill opinion "of me, as I ſhould, I feared, be conſiderably "hurt by ſuch an opinion on his ſide."

Here I ſtopped, I wonder, indeed, how I was able to ſay ſo much, eſpecially as Mr. Sheffield ſeemed to fix his eyes on me with uncommon attention.

My reply was not, I ſaw plainly, ſatisfactory: yet good manners, I imagined, prevented him from urging me any farther upon *that* ſubject. He affected to give a chearful turn to the converſation, but his endeavours ſtill proved unſucceſsful. I was reſtleſs, inattentive, unhappy. From what he had thrown out at the play I had thought that Mr. Sheffield had been acquainted with the true cauſe of Lord Woodford's behaviour to me, about which I had diſcovered ſo much impatience. I became, in ſhort, incapable of talking upon any other ſubject, and pleading, ſoon afterwards, my imperfect recovery, I made *that* apologize for my return to my own apartment.

When

When I was in private, I wept heartily. I reflected upon the ſtriking, and very diſagreeable change in Lord Woodford, and upon my inability to come to any eclairciſſement about an affair which filled me with ſuch painful ſenſations, till I was almoſt bereft of my reaſon.—'Tis true, I might ſoon have prevailed on my lord, by a letter, or by only ſending Kitty to him, to let me know why he was ſo greatly offended with me; but pride, as well as prudence, hindered me from taking ſuch a ſtep.—I was not conſcious of having done any thing to occaſion my lord's reaſonable diſpleaſure, and, therefore, could not but think him exceedingly capricious. Prudence, alſo, forbade me to make any overtures towards the renewal of our correſpondence. Honour too, and a regard for my lord—which I diſcovered by endeavouring to prevent his differing with his family—all prompted me to be ſilent, and not to ſeek to revive an attachment, which his mother had wiſhed with ſo much earneſtneſs to break off; and the time was now arrived ſo much deſired by my lord's friends: for my lord now could look upon me, in the greateſt diſtreſs, with the coldeſt indifference. In conſequence of all theſe reflections, I brought myſelf to reſolve—though my reſolution coſt me dear—to take no farther notice of what had paſſed, but to endeavour to appear eaſy at leaſt, though I found it utterly impoſſible to be really ſo.—However, as I never had approved of deceit, I was a very awkward hypocrite.

Mr. Sheffield immediately ſaw, I believe, that I was far from being internally chearful, though I affected to be outwardly ſo, for he redoubled his aſſiduities and ſolicitations to pleaſe me: his polite

polite efforts were not, indeed, ſo ſucceſsful as he, apparently, wiſhed them to be, yet I made no reſiſtance to them. Concluding, that he knew a great deal more of Lord Woodford than he choſe to own. I was in hopes that he would let ſomething fall in converſation, inadvertently, which might gratify my curioſity, though not give my heart all the deſired eaſe. —Animated by theſe hopes, I continued to liſten to him, and accompanied him, at his earneſt requeſt, Mrs. Stevens being always of our party, to ſeveral public places. Yet I will honeſtly confeſs, I did not accompany him to ſuch places, becauſe I expected any pleaſure by going to them; I flattered myſelf that I ſhould have a chance to meet Lord Woodford, and that I might perhaps diſcover the motives which had induced him to behave to me in ſo ſtrange a manner.

In this mode of life we remained about a month, from the night I ſaw my lord at the play.—Mr. Sheffield was now become one of the family: he was really very entertaining, and ſtrove to make the hours paſs away agreeably, by every method he could think of; never did he take an improper advantage of our private interviews, for we frequently happened to be by ourſelves.—His company was therefore, welcome to me, yet I ſecretly pined at the mortifying change in my lord's behaviour. My health gradually declined; I loſt my appetite; ſleep fled from my eyelids, ſo that in a very ſhort time I became greatly altered in my perſon—I was pale, and had an emaciated appearance.

Mr. Sheffield often took notice of the alteration in my looks, and propoſed ſeveral remedies.

dies.—Country air and riding, were thoſe which he moſt ſtrongly recommended; the ſeaſon, indeed, juſt at that time, was not favourable for either; but he inſiſted upon my making rural excurſions on horſeback, whenever there was a fine morning; and enforced the neceſſity of my having recourſe to ſuch a proceeding ſo powerfully to Mrs. Stevens, that ſhe began to teaſe me about it almoſt as much as he did. To ſilence them both, therefore, for they wearied my ears by always talking upon the ſame ſubject, I told them one day that I did not think either my riding, or going into the country, was at all neceſſary.—"Beſides," added I, looking at Mrs. Stevens, "ſuppoſing they were, I am, you know, under "Lady Woodford's protection, and cannot "remove myſelf without her conſent."

"How, Miſs Oſgood," cried Mr. Sheffield, appearing extremely ſurpriſed; "Are you really "under Lady Woodford's care? is *ſhe* your "friend?"

"She does me the honour to tell me ſo," replied I.

"Then *ſhe* is, unqueſtionably, the perſon "who prevents your being happy with my "lord."

I coloured like fire: but ſoon recovering, anſwered with more ſpirit than I imagined I could, poſſibly, have diſcovered, "There is ſo "wide a difference, Sir, between Lord Wood-"ford's ſituation and mine, that an alliance "between us can never be thought of. I "ought never, indeed, to have expected any "particular favours from his lordſhip, but I "have done nothing to merit his ill opinion." I could not proceed: remembering, with pain

remem-

remembring, the many happy days I had paſsed with him, at his houſe at——I burſt into tears, and ſighs unnumbered forced a paſſage from my cruelly-agitated boſom.

Unable to bear the grief which overwhelmed me, I roſe in order to quit the room.

Mr. Sheffield riſing at the ſame moment, caught my hand, and made a great many apologies for having, unintentionally, occaſioned me ſo much uneaſineſs.—"Since Lady Wood-"ford is your friend," continued he, "let me "intreat you, if you have the ſlighteſt regard "for your health, to acquaint her with the "neceſſity there is for your going into the "country—She will, doubtleſs, conſent to "your temporary abſence from London, for "the promotion of your recovery."

I ſtaid to hear no more, but haſtened to my chamber, and ſincerely wiſhed that my illneſs—if it was an illneſs—might carry me out of a world in which I had ſo much trouble and vexation, ſo little quiet and content.

To ſtrengthen my wiſhes, to render me ſtill more diſſatisfied with the world, Lady Woodford made her appearance in the evening. After having chatted about a quarter of an hour, with Mrs. Stevens, upon indifferent things, ſhe ſaid, as if meerly by accident; "When my ſon "is married—and I hope his marriage will be "finiſhed in a few weeks—I will take Fanny "down with me into Northamptonſhire."

I changed colour—I knew not what reply to make, or which way to look. Not a great while before that evening, ſuch a ſpeech would have laid me almoſt lifeleſs on the floor; but my lord's neglect, anger, and indifference, had prepared me for every thing dreadful.—I was not

not, 'tis true, entirely deprived of my ſenſes, but the ſhock I felt was too ſevere to be ſupported.

Lady Woodford ſaw my diſtreſs, and with a view to comfort me, ſaid, "Nay, Fanny, af-
"ter having ſo heroically given up my ſon,
"and perſuaded him to marry the lady always
"deſigned for him, can you now feel any
"concern at his being about to chuſe a wife ſo
"every way worthy of him? If you eſteem
"him, if you even love him as you ought,
"you would be pleaſed to hear of his going
"to do ſo laudable an action; an action which
"will, in all probability, ſecure his future
"happineſs."

"Nobody, Madam," replied I, "can more
"truly wiſh Lord Woodford happineſs than
"myſelf, and I earneſtly pray to heaven, that
"he may ever enjoy it."

I could ſay no more; I went directly out of the room. I hated myſelf for having been afflicted by hearing of what would, moſt probably, enſure Lord Woodford the eſteem of his family, and of courſe his felicity: yet I muſt confeſs, that I was ſelfiſh enough to wiſh that *I* had been the perſon neceſſary to compleat his happineſs.—I had flattered myſelf that he would have thought me ſo, as I really believed he would never find a woman more willing to make a ſubmiſſive wife.—Feeling myſelf the object of his diſpleaſure, I felt ſenſations painful beyound expreſſion.—"Why ſhould he be
"angry with *me*, becauſe he is going to marry
"another woman? I have done nothing to
"offend him: I am in no ſhape to blame, be-
"cauſe my rank and fortune are not equal to
"his; ſurely, then, he might have parted
"with

" with me upon friendly terms.—His ſudden
" coolneſs, and his total indifference, have
" cruelly afflicted my heart.—Would a man,
" even of common humanity, have ſtood by,
" and looked on a woman he had never ſeen
" before, in the diſtreſs *I* was, without diſco-
" vering *ſome* compaſſion for her, if he had
" not actually choſen to offer his aſſiſtance?—
" How very unkindly did Lord Woodford
" behave by neglecting me, and in the moſt
" cutting manner too, when I was deeply di-
" ſtreſſed on *his* account! On his brow ſat a
" ſullen kind of diſcontent, which pierced me
" to the ſoul.—And muſt I ſee him no more?
" muſt I loſe him for ever? muſt I never hear
" him tell me what I have done to offend him?
" muſt I never receive my pardon from him?

Oppreſſed by theſe reflections, I felt my ſituation almoſt inſupportable. From prudence, from pride, at leaſt, I ought to have rouſed myſelf; I ought to have triumphed over the ſorrow which invaded my heart, but I ſunk under the weight of it.—A ſecond fever ſeized me, of a more diſagreeable nature than the firſt; it was a ſlow, nervous one. I could neither eat, nor ſleep, nor take pleaſure in any thing. The phyſician, who attended me, by Lady Woodford's order, declared, that if I was not immediately aſſiſted by air and exerciſe, a decline might very rationally be expected.

In conſequence of the doctor's declaration, Mrs. Stevens and I ſet out for Kenſington, to a lodging which ſhe had taken for me.—A horſe was alſo recommended by Mr. Sheffield, who viſited us with as much regularity there as he had down in town; and took an infinite deal

deal of pains to prevail on me to let him teach me the *menage*; but to no purpoſe.—I was diſguſted with him, with every body, with every thing. I only deſired to ſit by myſelf, and to try to find out what had cauſed ſo ſudden a change in Lord Woodford: and as life yielded me no ſort of ſatisfaction, I wiſhed to die.—I could only be perſuaded to take a turn now and then in Kenſington-Gardens, when there happened to be a very fine morning. In thoſe gardens, I was always accompanied by Mrs. Stevens, and Mr. Sheffield: the latter frequently importuned me to let *him*, alone, go with me, when the former was, accidentally, engaged, but he could never carry his point; nor could he ever make me conſent to remove, for a week or ten days to a houſe which he had in Berkſhire, on the ſituation of which, he expatiated with the ſtrongeſt encomiums. —I paid no attention to his perſuaſions, or his arguments, for many arguments he had recourſe to, in order to convince me of the expediency of a removal.—I told him, "That "I had done every thing which reaſon, and "religion required of me to preſerve a life "hateful to me, and that I would ſtay, and "reſign myſelf to my fate, where I was."

In a few weeks after my arrival at Kenſington, Mr. Sheffield began to mention Lord Woodford's approaching marriage with Miſs Bromfield, as a piece of news every where talked of.—"Miſs Bromfield," added he, "is "juſt recovered from a ſevere illneſs, which "my Lord's neglect had occaſioned; and they "are now to be ſeen in all public places toge-"ther. She is a very fine girl; there is great "elegance in her perſon, and ſweetneſs in "her manners; ſhe will, therefore, I imagine,

"certainly

" certainly fix Lord Woodford's heart, as he " is a man of true taſte."

This intelligence, with the ſupplemental panegyric on Miſs Bromfield's perſon, and behaviour, did not, you may be ſure, tend to make me eaſier than I was before. On the contrary, they increaſed my wretchedneſs; (though, indeed, there could hardly be any addition to it) they alſo induced me to think, that Mr. Sheffield—deſirous as he was of being more attentive to me than ever—was not the man he had appeared to be.—But to ſay truth, I had been ſo much miſtaken, that I became out of humour with the whole ſex, and cared not whether I ever converſed with a man again. —As Sheffield, however, had been, in the language of the world, extremely polite, and as I was too negligent about every thing to exert myſelf ſufficiently to quarrel with him, I ſuffered him to be officious about me, without diſcouraging his aſſiduities: yet by pleading illneſs, and the neceſſity of confining myſelf to my own chamber, I avoided him as much as poſſible.

While I was ſitting, one day, in a ſtupified ſtate, Kitty came running into my room— " O, madam," ſaid ſhe, eagerly, " Here is a " letter for you, and I am ſure and certain it " is from Lord Woodford."

Seeing me change colour, ſeeing me ready to faint, ſhe corrected her vivacity, fearing ſhe had alarmed me too much, and added, " I be- " lieve it comes from *him*: I ſhall be vaſtly " miſtaken if it does not."

I took it with a trembling hand: and, in no ſmall agitation, read the following lines:

To

To Miſs Osgood.

THOUGH I have a thouſand times reſolved to think no more of what has given me ſuch intenſe diſquiet, I ſhould think myſelf diveſted of humanity, could I ſee you on the brink of a precipice without warning you of your dangerous ſituation. Sheffield, who, by his behaviour, appears to you, perhaps, in the moſt advantageous light, has formed the moſt infamous deſign againſt you, which he conceals by a conduct ſo extremely ſpecious, that both yourſelf and Mrs. Stevens have been deceived by it. By making you believe that he is deſperately in love with you, he hopes to ſee you fall into his ſnare. He reckons upon your imagining that his intentions are honourable, and expects you to place a confidence in him, which will give him an opportunity to triumph over your credulity.—Be upon your guard, therefore, for you may be aſſured that my information is authentic; and that I have neither been actuated by jealouſy nor love to take this ſtep.—Conſcious of having no intereſted views upon this occaſion, I can, with the ſincereſt truth, aver, that nothing but an ardent deſire to preſerve you from the threatened blow againſt your honour and your peace, could have urged me to trouble you with this letter.

WOODFORD.

You cannot eaſily conceive, my dear friend, the different emotions which I felt during the peruſal of the above letter; and I am ſure I cannot

cannot deſcribe them.—I changed colour ſeveral times: I was, at the firſt opening of it, animated with hope; I then reddened with vexation—when I read on, and found that my lord was become totally indifferent about me, I turned pale: the concluding words chilled my blood to ſuch a degree, that it almoſt ceaſed to flow in my veins. The letter fell from my hands on the floor, and I ſunk back in my chair without ſenſe, without motion.

Kitty ſcreamed for help, but nobody happened to be, juſt then, within hearing. The horrid lamentation ſhe made over me, ſoon brought me to myſelf,

"Good God! madam," cried ſhe, what "can my lord have written to affect you ſo "much?"

"Oh! Kitty," ſaid I, as ſoon as I could ſpeak, "I am for ever loſt—ruined every "way;—but 'tis no matter: I hope I ſhall "not long ſuffer.—My lord, however, has "acted very kindly to warn me of the miſ-"chief intended againſt me.—Heaven bleſs "him for it!"

"And heaven bleſs *you*, madam," replied Kitty, "for methinks your head rambles "ſtrangely."

"No, Kitty—My head is light, indeed, but "I am not mad neither. God only knows "what I might have been, had not my guar-"dian angel—for ſurely I may call Lord "Woodford ſo—as he has twice ſaved me—"ſent me this timely intelligence."

"Then the letter *did* bring good news at "laſt?" cried the honeſt affectionate girl—"I thought my lord could never leave you,

"madam.

" madam. Oh! had you but ſeen him the " day when he came back, and gave me the " letter—I am certain he loves you."

" Talk no more of him, Kitty—I muſt try " to forget him—but I muſt firſt"—added I, " burſting into tears—learn to die."

Poor Kitty, whom I had actually terrified, ſaid every thing in her power to comfort me, but to no purpoſe. I inſiſted upon her leaving me. At the ſame time, I inſiſted upon her never letting Sheffield into the houſe again, and upon charging the reſt of the family always to deny me to him.

With difficulty, I prevailed on her to leave me; ſo urgent was ſhe to be acquainted with my reaſons, for giving ſo extraordinary an order.

When I had ſhut the door upon her, I threw myſelf into a chair, and began to read my letter again.—My lord had told me, that he was neither jealous of me, nor in love with me, yet as he had communicated the moſt friendly intelligence to me, he was, certainly entitled to my ſincereſt acknowledgments.—But could I prudently, make thoſe acknowledgments?—Were there not many reaſons to be urged againſt my writing to my lord!—I could not, however, check a ſtrong deſire to ſhew my gratitude.—" It can never be wrong," ſaid I, to myſelf, " to be grateful."

Diſturbed as my imagination was, I ſat down to thank my lord for his kind warning, without imagining that I ſhould appear in a criminal light to *him*, by ſo doing, or to Lady Woodford, tho' I had promiſed her not to correſpond with her ſon I was in a very particular ſituation.

Two

Two or three letters did I write, before I could pleaſe myſelf. My head was, indeed, ſo diſordered, that I found it impoſſible to deliver the ſentiments of my heart with propriety: yet gratitude puſhed me on, and operated ſo ſtrongly, that I at laſt finiſhed my letter. Notwithſtanding his indifference, my heart overflowed with tenderneſs, and tho' he had confeſſed himſelf no longer my lover, he had, ſufficiently, proved himſelf my friend to merit my unfeigned thanks. Had he not been my friend, he would not have taken the leaſt notice of me.

To the Earl of WOODFORD.

My Lord,

WITH a heart full of the moſt grateful ſenſations for the intelligence you, generouſly, conveyed to me, with regard to Mr. Sheffield, I take this firſt opportunity to return my ſincereſt acknowledgments, tho' I never entertained ſentiments for that gentleman different from thoſe which I felt at the ſight of a common acquaintance. I am not, however, leſs obliged to your lordſhip for your ſolicitude about me, for your noble readineſs to ſave me from the danger with which I was threatened. —Immediately availing myſelf of your moſt friendly information, I gave orders to be denied whenever Mr. Sheffield made his appearance; and, that he may not have the ſlighteſt hopes of ſucceſs, I am determined to ſee him no more.

I cannot conclude without intreating your lordſhip to pardon me for this reply, which

you will probably deem unneceſſary, and even impertinent, but I cannot bear the thoughts of ingratitude. Pardon me, alſo, my lord, for any thing which I may have, inadvertently, ſaid or done, to diſpleaſe you—*you*, my beſt friend, my generous deliverer, my liberal benefactor.—Your indifference, my lord, cuts me to the ſoul, yet in ſpite of that indifference, I ſhall ever remain,

With the trueſt reſpect,

And eſteem,

Your much obliged

Humble ſervant,

FRANCES OSGOOD.

When I reviewed the above letter, I made a thouſand objections to it:—yet as I could not write another in my then frame of mind, I reſolved to ſend it. I would not, however, ſend it by Kitty. I ſhould have been tranſported, indeed, to have received a minute account of its reception by my lord, but I thought that I ſhould be guilty of a great impropriety by ſo doing, and that he might imagine I wiſhed to revive the tender paſſion in his boſom—(and I certainly did wiſh for the revival of it.) I acted in oppoſition to my inclination, by not committing my letter to Kitty's care, but I acted agreeably to the dictates of diſcretion, by diſpatching it to him in another way.

Having touched my bell, Kitty came to me: I bid her carry it to the poſt-houſe.

" Had

" Had I not better go to my lord, myſelf, " madam?" ſaid ſhe, " and give it into his " own hands?"

" On no account," replied I—" 'tis highly " improper."

" It may miſcarry by the poſt."

" Let it then," ſaid I, vexed to death at being ſo teaſed to do a thing which I ſo earneſtly deſired to do, and from which I was reſtrained by prudence.

Kitty, ſilenced by the laſt reply, uttered in a very peeviſh tone, left the room—ſhe ſaid not a word, but ſhe ſhe looked full as much diſpleaſed as *I* was: and I actually was uncharitable enough to impute her eagerneſs to carry my letter, to a mercenary diſpoſition. I thought, indeed that ſhe only wanted to throw herſelf in the way of another *preſent*.—However, my reflections concerning *her* motives were ſoon ſucceeded by others, which gave me far more diſturbance: reflections, which made me reſtleſs, and unhappy beyond expreſſion.—What the girl had mentioned with regard to the poſſibility of my letter's miſcarrying by the poſt, increaſed my diſquiet.—" If my lord receives " not my acknowledgments, after having given " me ſo ſtriking a proof of his friendſhip, he " will call me, and with reaſon, the moſt un- " grateful of women, and think me entirely " unworthy of his attention."—I then wiſhed a thouſand times, that I had permitted Kitty to carry my letter: ſhe might have left it with his ſervant, who would not have failed to deliver it to him. Without her having ſeen my lord, I ſhould have been aſſured of his receiving it.

With theſe reflections, and others of the ſame kind, was I tormented long after Kitty had left the room.—In the midſt of them, I was rouſed by the entrance of the maid of the houſe, to inform me that Mr. Sheffield was below, and begged to ſee me.

I ordered her, directly, to tell him that I was engaged, and then enquired after Kitty.

"She is gone out, madam," replied the maid.

The ſame anſwer I received three hours afterwards.—I then began to fancy—where is the woman who does not, ſometimes, flatter herſelf—that, diſregarding the ſtrictneſs of my commands, ſhe was gone with my letter to my lord.—This idea operated ſo ſtrongly in my mind, that I grew more compoſed, and I pleaſed myſelf with thinking, that I ſhould hear a circumſtantial relation of what had paſſed between her and his lordſhip: I pleaſed myſelf with thinking that ſhe would juſtify my conduct with regard to Sheffield, if he queſtioned her about it, and convince him that I had not given Sheffield any encouragement.—I pleaſed myſelf, for once, to think that my poſitive orders had been diſobeyed.

As ſoon as Kitty returned, I hurried to the top of the ſtairs, and bade her come into my room, intending to examine her quite unobſerved, as I could take ſuch a ſtep without appearing particular; for ſince my illneſs, I had kept pretty cloſe to my chamber, and Mrs. Stevens was always willing to let Kitty be with me when ſhe could ſpare her.

How exceſſively was I diſappointed when ſhe told me, with the greateſt alacrity, upon my aſking her where ſhe had been, that having procured

cured her miſtreſs's leave, ſhe had put my letter in a poſt-houſe in London, imagining that it would go ſafer from thence, than from Kenſington.

I changed colour, I am ſure; I turned from her, ſhut my door, and burſt into tears. I concluded, that my lord would never receive my laſt letter, about the conveyance of which, I was particularly anxious.

Kitty's new intelligence was certainly very unfavourable to the the reſtoration of my health: I grew worſe and worſe, as my mind became more and more diſordered. Mrs. Stevens began to teaſe me about Sheffield, and by ſo doing, retarded my recovery.—She defended his character; ſhe was amazed to find that I harboured the ſlighteſt ſuſpicions againſt him.

To convince her that my ſuſpicions were not groundleſs, I produced Lord Woodford's letter. I threw her entirely off her guard, and the words "pique, and jealouſy," eſcaped her. Thoſe words were, I muſt confeſs, the moſt comfortable ones I had heard for a conſiderable time: in order, therefore, to enjoy them more fully, I pretended to differ from her entirely: I maintained an oppoſite opinion, and applied to the letter as a witneſs to the truth of my aſſertion.—I had the pleaſure to hear her contradict me. I told her, with great earneſtneſs, that my lord was neither troubled with love nor jealouſy, as he had expreſsly declared himſelf free from thoſe paſſions, on my account.

"Had he not been agitated by both of "them." replied ſhe briſkly, "he would not "have mentioned either the one or the other."

The fluttering pleaſure which I received from that ſpeech is not to be deſcribed. The joy which my heart felt, was diffuſed over my countenance.

Mrs. Stevens found out her miſtake, and altered her tone, but it was too late. My eyes were opened, and I ſaw my lord's letter in a very different light. I really fancied that he ſtill loved me, that he was even jealous of Sheffield. This conjecture gave me unſpeakable ſatisfaction, and was, conſequently, of more ſervice towards the compleat reſtoration of my health, than all the remedies which had been preſcribed for me. My ſpirits returned, and I determined to preſerve a life which was ſtill, I flattered myſelf, valued by Lord Woodford. Nay, I began to imagine that there had been no foundation for the report with regard to his marriage with Miſs Bromfield, that he was not going to marry any other woman. I began to imagine that Sheffield—whom I reſolved never to ſee again—had invented the tale merely to carry his point.—My heart danced within me—I looked, I ſpoke with unuſual vivacity, and no longer refuſed to accompany Mrs. Stevens to Kenſington Gardens.

Juſt when we were ſeting out, one morning to thoſe gardens, ſomebody came to her from London on buſineſs, and ſhe, finding that ſhe ſhould be detained ſome time, deſired me not to wait for her, but to go to the gardens, adding, that ſhe would follow me as ſoon as poſſible.

I complied, and walked on ſlowly, not being able to move very faſt.

No ſooner had I entered the gravel walk, than

than I heard a perſon ſay, "'Tis ſhe—'tis "ſhe."

I felt my heart throb: turning about, I ſaw Lord Woodford, who exclaimed—"My Fanny! but good heaven! how pale, how emaciated!"

He caught my hand—I trembled, but I could not ſpeak,

"Dear Fanny," continued he, "forgive my "unjuſt ſuſpicions; impute them entirely to "to the violence of my love."

He then ſtopped, gazed on me, waited for an anſwer.—I had no words ready.

"Will you not forgive me, Fanny?" added he, in plaintive accents.

"Forgive you, my Lord?" replied I, and pauſed: my tears ſupplied the deficiencies of my tongue.

"My dear, dear girl," ſaid he, eagerly, "why this ſorrow now? let me wipe away "thoſe precious drops."

Still I could not ſpeak; the tranſports which I felt on ſeeing him again, and on ſeeing him ſo unexpectedly affectionate, deprived me of the power of utterance, almoſt deprived me of my ſenſes.

My lord immediately led me to a ſeat which happened to be near us; placed himſelf by my ſide, threw his arm tenderly round me, and intreated me to be compoſed.—"Tell me, my deareſt girl," added he, "why you weep "thus?"

"I weep for joy at the ſight of you, my "Lord," replied I; "for joy to find that you "are not angry with me, that you are ſo dif-"ferent from the man you appeared to be "at our laſt meeting."

He preſſed me to his boſom while I ſpoke, with rapture equal to my own. I, then, recollecting what I had ſo lately heard concerning his mariage with Miſs Bromfield, began to fear that we were running into a cenſurable intimacy. Yet while I drew back from his reſpectfully-tender touch, I ſighed to think that I was prohibited the enjoyment of ſo ſweet a ſatisfaction: a ſatisfaction, which, in ſome ſituations, would have been not only innocent, but laudable.

"Why do you ſigh, my deareſt girl?" ſaid he, ſtill detaining me, ſtill holding my hand in his; "Do you find it ſo difficult a matter to "pardon me? I was, I own, very unhappy "to ſee you with Sheffield at the play: I was "unprepared for ſuch a mortifying ſight: I "thought him too near you, too officious a-"bout you, and I was afraid that his inſinua-"ting behaviour had met with encourage-"ment from you. The manner in which you "anſwered him, indeed, confirmed my appre-"henſions at the time, and a thouſand tor-"menting fancies darted into my mind: but "when I beheld you fainting in his arms, "when I ſaw your head reclined upon his bo-"ſom, I ſaw too much.—I ſtrove to fly from "a ſight which was inſupportable.—I was, in "truth, ſo diſtracted by it, that when you "ſpoke, I only was ſenſible of the motion of "your lips, I heard not a ſyllable which you "articulated.—I hurried to remove from a "place in which I ceaſed to be maſter of my-"ſelf, leſt I ſhould have been guilty of ſome "glaring abſurdity.—I returned home ſo ex-"ceedingly diſconcerted and unhappy, that "Cowley, who has lived with me from my in-

"fancy,

" fancy, ſuppoſed me to be very much out of
" order. In ſhort he aſked me ſo many queſ-
" tions about the ſtate of my health, that he
" became quite tireſome: any other man
" equally inquiſitive, would have been in the
" higheſt degree impertinent; but I was too
" well acquainted with his prejudices in *your*
" favour, and with his affection for *me*, to be
" really offended at his numerous interrogati-
" ons. I, therefore, as ſoon as I could bring
" myſelf to enter upon an affair which had
" given me ſo much uneaſineſs, told him what
" I had ſeen, and under whoſe care I had left
" you.—He immediately quitted me, to make
" an enquiry after you. When he came home
" he ſaid, in order, doubtleſs, to eradicate
" from my fond boſom a paſſion which had
" cauſed me ſo much anxiety, perſecuted as I
" was both by my mother, and the reſt of my
" family," " Every body believes that Miſs
" Oſgood is going, very ſoon, to be married
" to Mr. Sheffield."—I was ſhocked at the
" information: it confirmed the ſuſpicions I
" had entertained with regard to your conſtan-
" cy: yet I wondered, at the ſame time, to
" hear of Sheffield's intentions to marry at all,
" firmly believing that no woman but yourſelf
" could have brought about ſo great a revolu-
" tion in his mind. Cowley was, however, ſo
" particular, and ſo poſitive, that I could not
" poſſibly, queſtion his veracity.—Soon after
" this event, my mother made a freſh attempt
" to prevail on me to ſee Miſs Bromfield, who
" was, ſhe ſaid, a little recovered; aſſuring me
" that my friendly attentions, alone, were
" wanting to compleat the recovery of her
" health. Lady Woodford could not have

" ſeized a moment more favourable to her
" deſign. Diſcontented as I was, and actually
" jealous of Sheffield, I catched at every thing
" which could, in any ſhape, feed my reſent-
" ment: a reſentment ſo fooliſh, that I feel
" myſelf at this inſtant, heartily aſhamed of
" having made a diſcovery of it to you: de-
" graded in my own eyes, I have, no doubt,
" rendered myſelf ridiculous in yours.—But to
" the point; to gratify that fooliſh reſent-
" ment, I agreed to ſee Miſs Bromfield,
" though I would not, on any terms, be pre-
" ſented to her as a lover: telling my mother,
" that I could not poſſibly have any domeſtic
" connections with *that* family.—My mother,
" however, partial to her young friend, hoped
" that time and *her* merit would remove all my
" objections to an union with her, eſpecially
" when ſhe ſaw that I could not treat a girl
" with ill-manners, and ill-humour, who had,
" evidently, diſcovered a very ſingular pre-
" poſſeſſion in my favour.—In the mean while,
" I ordered Cowley to make the ſtricteſt en-
" quiries concerning you; to my extreme
" mortification I heard that you was ſeen
" every where with Sheffield, and that thoſe
" who did not know him imagined you would
" ſoon be married to him: thoſe who were
" thoroughly acquainted with him, thought he
" had deſigns of a different nature.—This in-
" telligence added fuel to my jealouſy, and
" conſiderably ſtrengthened the ill opinion I
" had harboured of you: I was quite con-
" vinced that you had given me up for a man
" whom you believed to be altogether inde-
" pendent, and able to make you a very gen-
" teel ſettlement. I, then—forgive me Fanny

" —and

" —and not till then, ranked you among the " reſt of your ſex: and tho' it pained me to " find that *you*, whom I had ſo highly eſteem- " ed, on whoſe affection I had ſo ſtrongly de- " pended—that *you* had deceived me, yet I re- " ſolved to conquer a paſſion which I imagined " —blinded by my jealouſy—I could not gra- " tify with honour—I reſolved to tear you " from my boſom.—In ſhort, I determined to " make my addreſſes to Miſs Bromfield, to " whom I was not, according to all appear- " ances, an object of indifference; and that I " might not change my mind—for I very " much diſtruſted myſelf—I informed my " mother of my deſign; yet deſired her not " to mention it to Sir George Bromfield till I " had, myſelf, ſpoken to the young lady, as " I had no reaſon to expect a refuſal from *him*. " My mother complied with my requeſt, and " made parties with Miſs Bromfield to ſeveral " places, on purpoſe to throw us into each " other's way.—I did not oppoſe her proceed- " ings, but my heart was ſilent with regard to " the lady who was to be miſtreſs of it, and " ſighed deeply for its loſt Fanny.—Being " drawn in, much againſt my inclination, to " ſpend an evening with ſome gay young fel- " lows, one of them mentioned Sheffield, and " his having a deſign upon a fine girl, who " had lodgings at Kenſington for her health, " as ſhe had a very delicate conſtitution.— " He has carried on his ſcheme hithereto," continued the young fellow, " with great " ſucceſs, by making her believe that he in- " tends to marry her; but I ſuppoſe the affair " will end with a trip to Scotland, or ſome- " where elſe; a ſham parſon may, perhaps,

tack

" tack them together nearer home, if the
" buſineſs cannot be done without the appear-
" ance of a marriage."—I fancied immediately
" that *you* was the perſon whom Sheffield had
" ſingled out to impoſe upon in the moſt infa-
" mous manner, and though I fancied alſo
" that I loved you no longer, I could not bear
" to think of your being betrayed by ſuch a
" villain; I, therefore, ſat down, and wrote
" a few lines juſt to apprize you of your dan-
" ger. I was, at that time, ſwelling with re-
" ſentment againſt you, for having paid the
" leaſt attention to Sheffield's converſation,
" and could not finiſh my letter without tell-
" ing you that I neither loved, nor was jea-
" lous.—But my heart revolted againſt my
" hand.—I was, at that very inſtant, torn to
" pieces with jealouſy and love.——When
" your ſervant brought me your anſwer, I felt
" myſelf ſo much agitated by thoſe two im-
" petuous paſſions, that I could not help diſ-
" covering a violent propenſity to hear what
" you could ſay in your own defence. Kitty
" plainly ſaw, that I was by no means ſo indif-
" ferent about you as I had pretended to be.
" But what became of me when I read your
" dear letter! every word of it penetrated my
" ſoul!—it immediately excited admiration,
" eſteem, and love: and when Kitty informed
" me, that you never had the leaſt thought of
" Sheffield, and that my unpardonable neglect
" had conſiderably injured your health, I was
" almoſt frantic with grief, I was wild for an
" opportunity to make my peace with you, if
" poſſible. I acquainted Kitty with my ardent
" wiſhes, who told me, that they could by no
" means be accompliſhed, as you had promiſed

" Lady

" Lady Woodford not to receive me, and as " you would not, on any account, break your " promiſe to her. — " Beſides, my lord," added ſhe, " you are engaged to another " lady: Miſs Oſgood will, therefore, think it " criminal to have any farther connections " with you."—When I preſſed her to ſtay, " and to take an anſwer to your letter, ſhe " replied, " that you did not know of her " coming to me, that you had, indeed, ex- " preſsly deſired her not to come to me, and " that ſhe could not, therefore, venture to " carry my anſwer back to her.—I admired the " honeſt and affectionate diſpoſition of the " girl, who had a ſecond time diſcovered a " very warm attachment to you, but I quite ador- " ed *your* principles, and *your* ſpirit. The ten- " derneſs running through your letter made " me diſtracted to give you the moſt ſtriking " proofs of my regret, of my remorſe, for " having injuriouſly ſuſpected you; to give " you the ſtrongeſt aſſurances that I would " marry no woman on earth except yourſelf, " and to declare my fixed determination to do " every thing in my power to reconcile my " mother to a marriage, without which, there " could be no happineſs for *me* in this world. " Kitty, finding me ſo eager to procure an in- " terview with you, told me, that you, ſome- " times, walked in theſe gardens, but never " alone.—I thanked her for the hint, and " aſſured her, that I would come here every " day till I had ſeen you, without paying any " regard to Mrs. Stevens.—How great, how " agreeable was my ſurprize to ſee you appear " by yourſelf! how bleſt was I to have ſo " charming an opportunity to ſpeak to you

uninter-

" uninterrupted by a third perſon! How doubly " bleſt to find you ſo overwhelmed with joy at " the ſight of me! Was you not ſo over- " whelmed, Fanny? are you not happy? are " you not tranſported?—Tell me, my deareſt " girl."

" I have told you already, my lord, how " exceſſively I was delighted at the ſight of " you—I muſt not tell you ſo again: I ſhall " always think of you as I do *now*, but we " muſt not talk any more upon this ſubject."

" I ſee that we muſt not," anſwered he, looking tenderly at me; " the tears, I perceive, " are ready to ſtart from thoſe dear Eyes.— " Your ſpirits have been lowered too much by " the ſhocks which I have occaſioned to them; " your health has been injured by my cruel " behaviour. I ſincerely hope, however, that " from this happy moment your recovery, in " every ſhape, will be ſpeedy.—You are now " made thoroughly eaſy with regard to me; " you may depend upon my giving my mother " no reſt till ſhe has approved of the choice " of my heart; you may rely on——"

" Hold my Lord," ſaid I, interrupting him, with all the firmneſs I could aſſume, " this " muſt not be: Lady Woodford is perfectly " right: ſhe ſhews herſelf the fondeſt, the " the beſt of mothers by urging you to mar- " ry Miſs Bromfield, or any other Lady of " equal rank, and equally accompliſhed, to " whom you may find yourſelf inclined. " Comply with her deſires, my Lord, rather " than with *your own*: if you cannot love Miſs " Bromfield, look out for another lady: there " are numberleſs women, doubtleſs, to be met " with, who would make it the whole buſineſs

" of

" of their lives to engage, and to preſerve
" your affection: and, provided the woman
" you chuſe is ſuitable to you with regard to
" family and fortune, Lady Woodford will
" not, I imagine inſiſt upon your marrying
" Miſs Bromfield."

" I will marry no woman in the world,
" Fanny, but you; you alone are capable of
" making me happy."

" I hope I am my Lord," replied I haſtily—
" but not in the way you mention.—I flatter
" myſelf that you both love and eſteem me:
" if I am not miſtaken you will liſten to me;
" and I hope I ſhall give you ſufficient reaſons,
" by what I am going to ſay, for your chang-
" ing your preſent kind and generous intenti-
" ons with reſpect to *me*.—I am not upon a
" footing with you in point of rank: you will
" diſgrace your family by introducing me into
" it; *me*, a girl of no birth, with no fortune.
" I think myſelf very happy in having merited
" your lordſhip's regard, but I am at the ſame
" time, thoroughly ſenſible that I am not the
" Woman whom you ſhould think of making
" your wife.—It is therefore my Lord, from
" the ſincereſt affection for you, from the tru-
" eſt regard for your honour and your peace,
" that I inſiſt upon the refuſal of an offer
" which would make make me the happieſt of
" my ſex, were I in a ſituation to deſerve the
" completion of my wiſhes: wiſhes which muſt
" never be gratified. But tho' I am reſolved
" never to be acceſſary to your committing an
" irretrievable indiſcretion, by giving you my
" hand, I will ſolemnly aſſure you, that it ſhall
" be given to no other man living.—It is im-

poſſible

" poſſible for me to love any man but your " Lordſhip "

Here I ſtopped becauſe I ſaw my Lord impatient to reply.

" Enough, enough, my dear girl," ſaid he, ſtraining me, affectionately, to his boſom, " your laſt declaration is ſufficient to huſh all " my fears.—By aſſuring me that you prefer " me to every other man, and that you really " love me well enough to relinquiſh your own " felicity for the promotion—(as you imagine) " of mine, you diſcover a regard for me " which will, naturally, attach me to you " more ſtrongly than ever—Your exemplary " behaviour demands all the returns in my " power; your merit is ineſtimable: I love " you with redoubled ardour, and ſhall ever " remember with the moſt lively gratitude the " laſt letter you ſent to me, which has, in- " deed, ſaved us both from the greateſt miſe- " ry: for I will frankly own, that, believing " you to be drawn away from me by Sheffield's " ſeducing manners, and being cloſely driven " by my mother to ſhew ſome compaſſion for " Miſs Bromfield, I might, poſſibly have been " induced to do a deed which would have " plunged us all into wretchedneſs.—What an " eſcape have I had!—Yet I ſhall be ſtill diſ- " treſſed if you do not recover your health, " which, I fear, may be ſtill more injured by " ſitting in this place: let us walk, therefore, " my dear Fanny, as long as you dare venture " to ſtay in the gardens, and let me intreat " you to take all poſſible care of yourſelf for " your own ſake, as well as for mine.—I can- " not deſcribe the cutting anxiety which I have

" already

" already felt in conſequence of your being out " of order."

I thanked my lord earneſtly for his ſolicitude about me: I aſſured him that I was not ſo ill as he had imagined me to be, adding, however, that I thought it quite time for me to return home, as I fancied Mrs. Stevens had either been prevented from coming into the gardens, or had ſtrolled into a different walk.

My lord intreated me to give him another half hour, if I found no inconvenience from being ſo long abſent from my apartment. I complied with his requeſt, becauſe I did not intend to meet him again.

He preſſed me, extremely, when we parted, to be in the ſame place the next day, or any other day which would be more agreeable to me, as he ſhould be waiting in hopes of ſeeing me.

How charming was this attention to me! what an enchanting condeſcenſion! I almoſt adored him, and was, conſequently, fearful of giving way to emotions of tenderneſs which muſt have fruſtrated my deſign. I, therefore, neither promiſed my lord to meet him again, nor took any particular leave of him. I ſtrove, as much as poſſible, to ſtifle every riſing ſigh, to repel every tear which ſtarted into my eyes when he bade me adieu.—His laſt words were, " Take as much care of your health as " you would of mine. Remember that my " life depends upon your recovery."

I preſſed his hand, and, inſtead of a reply, clapped my hankerchief to my face, as if I had been incommoded by the wind, but, really, to conceal any improper change in my countenance,

nance, and walked away, not once looking back.

A ſudden noiſe, very ſoon afterwards, obliged me to turn my head; I ſaw my lord ſtanding quite ſtill with his arms folded, and with his eyes fixed on me intently.

Another look would have ruined me; I hurried home, and then to my chamber, without ſtaying to hear the apology Mrs. Stevens was making for having been hindered from following me.

On my table I found a letter for me: not knowing the hand, I opened it immediately, but when I ſaw Sheffield's name at the bottom of the paper, I would not read it.—Several letters came afterwards from the ſame perſon, and I treated them in the ſame manner:—I read none of them: by ſuch a behaviour I ſoon got rid of Mr. Sheffield's importunities, and indulged myſelf with reflecting upon my lord's tender, and firm attachment to me.—The ſatisfaction I felt from that attachment was tranſporting, and though I did not deſign to make an indirect advantage of it, greatly did it contribute towards the reſtoration of my health.—I recovered apace, and had fortitude enough to keep my reſolution by not going to the gardens, agreeably to my lord's repeated intreaties.

Soon after the above interview with my lord, Lady Woodford came to ſee me.

She ſtarted at the alteration in my perſon ſo much for the better, and told me, that ſhe thought I looked as well as ever.—"Surely, "Fanny," continued ſhe, examining me more nearly, "you are well enough to return to "London."

I aſſured

I aſſured her that I was, and that I only waited for her ladyſhip's commands.

" So ready with your obedience!" ſaid ſhe, with a forced ſmile—" I may expect then to " to receive a ſincere anſwer to this queſtion— " Have you ſeen my ſon?"

" I *have*, madam, replied I; on no account " would I deceive your ladyſhip. I met my " lord in Kenſington-Gardens, accidentally— " I am ſure, on *my* ſide,—but I will honeſtly " own, that *his* appearance there was occaſi- " oned by a letter which I had written to " him."

" How?" cried ſhe, with a ſevere look; " did you not tell me, that you would never " correſpond with him?"

" I never made a direct promiſe of that " kind, my lady," replied I; " if I had, I " ſhould moſt faithfully have kept it; but I " was, indeed, under a neceſſity of writing to " him: he ſaved me a ſecond time from ruin, " and I ſhould have been the moſt ungrateful " of human beings had I not returned proper " acknowledgments for ſo generous a beha- " viour."

I, then, perceiving that my lady did not know to what I alluded, told her all that had paſſed between us.

When I had finiſhed my little narrative, ſeverity fled from her countenance, and a ſoft melancholy overſpread it. She ſighed, and ſaid, " I now no longer wonder at my ſon's late car- " riage.—You are a good girl, Fanny—but " tell me, child, do you not believe that this " violent diſcretion which you affect, raiſes you " ſtill higher in his eſteem?"

" I am

" I am ſorry that your ladyſhip thinks that " my diſcretion is affected.—I can give up my " lord for *his* honour, and for *your* ſatisfaction, " but I can never conſent to leſſen myſelf in his " eyes."

My lady looked earneſtly at me. " You are " a very uncommon girl, Fanny—I wiſh I " could ſay more, but—"

Here ſhe pauſed—then proceeded in the following manner—" If Sheffield had not been " ſuſpected of bad deſigns—deſigns which my " lord's jealouſy ſuggeſted to him—would you " not have married him?"

" No, my lady; on no account would I " marry Mr. Sheffield."

" If that's the caſe, you may be aſſured that " my ſon will marry no woman but you.—— " Were *you* once happily ſettled, child, he " might, perhaps, be induced to change his " ſtate, but while you continue attached to " him alone, he will never marry any other " woman. By ſo doing you nouriſh *his* hopes, " and deſtroy *mine.*

Lady Woodford pronounced the latter part of the above ſpeech in ſuch mournful accents, and looked ſo totally diſtreſſed, that ſhe excited my compaſſion: ſhe alſo opened my eyes with regard to a proceeding which I could not defend. I, therefore, reſolved—tho' I knew that miſery would be my lot, and in ſpite of my promiſe to my lord—to enter into the marriage ſtate under the direction of her ladyſhip, in order to reſtore *her* peace, and and the peace of his family. I thought, at the ſame time, that my reſolution would prove fatal to me; for what would life be without Lord Woodford! —However, I did not declare my determination

to

to her ladyſhip—ſhe left me exceedingly dejected, and diſpleaſed, I was not much better ſatisfied myſelf; yet I believed that I had done my duty; and that belief ſerved to keep up my ſpirits.

We returned to London. Sometimes I went to the public diverſions to pleaſe Mrs. Stevens, but in a very private manner, becauſe I did not chuſe, for many reaſons, to be much ſeen.

A little while after our arrival in town, Kitty opened the door one morning, while I was ſitting at work in the parlour, and Mr. Seymount came in.

Flying to me, with looks full of joy, he cried, "How tranſported am I, my charming Fanny, "to find you at laſt? May my meeting with "you be as fortunate as I wiſh it; I ſhall then "be the happieſt of men."

I was quite ſurpriſed at the unexpected ſight of Mr. Seymount, but I was not charmed with his appearance; neither was I ſorry to ſee him, though I thought his addreſs was rather too familiar. I had, before my acquaintance with Lord Woodford, looked upon Mr. Seymount as a very agreeable man: and tho' I was not actually in love with him, at that time, I am not ſure whether I ſhould not have felt ſtrong prepoſſeſſions in his favour, if I had never known his lordſhip. I might have, probably, liked him better than any other man. But after I had been ſo long accuſtomed to Lord Woodford's delightful ſociety, it was impoſſible for me to behold *him* in the ſame light. —Feeling myſelf in this ſituation, I drew back with a ſerious air, and replied, "I am a-"ſtoniſhed, Sir, that you have found me out."

I was

(I was alſo very much ſhocked, as I could not but ſuppoſe that he had gained his information about me from my mother.)

"Why," ſaid he, "I have, with no ſmall "difficulty, procured this long wiſhed-for in- "terview. And to confeſs the truth, I was "greatly hurt to hear Mrs. Wanley ſay, that "you had eloped from her with Lord Wood- "ford, and that you lived with him in a very "improper manner: ſhe added, "I have "been informed that his lordſhip has turned "her off, and I am altogether at a loſs to "know what is become of her." "—This "ſpeech," continued Mr. Seymount, "was "delivered in a tone of concern on your "account, but her concern ſeemed to be "affected; if ſhe had really loved her daugh- "ſhe would not, I imagine, have been ſo "calm, and compoſed.—I was, I own, Miſs "Wanley, exceedingly ſhocked at the account "I received from your mother; as I had, "from my firſt acquaintance with you, felt an "inclination, a tender paſſion for you. I not "only admired you, I wiſhed to ſee you happy, "and could not help believing that you deſerv- "ed to be ſo, notwithſtanding all Mrs. Wan- "ley had ſaid: I was determined, therefore, "to make a farther enquiry.—I hurried to "Lord Woodford: I was juſt perſonally "known to him: but I choſe to aſk his do- "meſticks ſome previous queſtions. By them "I was informed that Lady Woodford had "taken you from her ſon's houſe, and placed "you with a particular friend of her own: "they added, that it was imagined you would "ſoon be married to my lord, with whom "you had never lived as a miſtreſs.—The lat-

ter

" ter piece of intelligence was very ſatisfactory:
" it was what I had extremely wiſhed to hear:
" but the former gave me great diſquiet.
" However, a few more queſtions brought out
" the whole affair. Finding that Lady Wood-
" ford ſtrongly oppoſed your marriage with
" my Lord; finding that you and my Lord
" neither ſaw each other, nor kept up any
" correſpondence, my hope revived, and I
" flattered myſelf, lovely Fanny, that you
" would no longer refuſe a man who had truly
" loved you before you became acquainted
" with Lord Woodford, and who had only
" been hindered from offering you his hand,
" at the time, by the ſtraitneſs of his circum-
" ſtances: he had not then a fortune worthy
" of your acceptance: he has it now in his
" power, by the death of an uncle, who ge-
" nerouſly left him two thouſand a year, to
" make a ſuitable proviſion for her who, alone,
" can render his life happy."

Here he ſtopped, and waited for my anſwer. Quite overwhelmed by the generoſity, and affection which he had diſcovered with a rapidity which aſtoniſhed me, I could not articulate a reply.—I wanted words, I wanted breath, to expreſs my feelings upon the very unexpected occaſion.

He ſaw my embarraſſment—Preſſing my hand affectionately, he cried, "I fear I have
" fluttered your ſpirits, my deareſt Fanny; but
" take time—I come not to diſtreſs you, my
" love: I only haſtened to do every thing in
" my power to make you happy."

This was going too far. To call me *my love*, was almoſt to ſay that every thing was ſettled between us; I was, therefore, very eager to

correct

correct ſo great a miſtake.—" Hold, Sir," ſaid I, " you run on too precipitately. I am ex-
" ceedingly obliged to you for your generous
" offer, but you have a father who will, un-
" doubtedly, be full as averſe to me for a
" daughter as Lady Woodford is."

" No," replied he, briſkly. " My father,
" indeed, while I was dependent on him,
" inſiſted upon my marrying a woman of his
" own choice, but as I am now in a very dif-
" ferent ſituation, he will give himſelf no
" farther trouble about me: he will not care
" whether my wife has a fortune or no."

" Perhaps you may be right," ſaid I, gravely,
" but a good father—and ſuch a father, I ſup-
" poſe, Mr. Seymount to be—will be, ration-
" ally, chagrined at his ſon's marrying a wo-
" man without a character—I have, it is true,
" preſerved my virtue, but my reputation is
" utterly loſt, as I have been ſupported by
" Lord Woodford, though he was too con-
" ſiderate to take an improper advantage of
" me after I had thrown myſelf inadvertently
" into his power.—You are not yet acquainted
" with half my ſtory, Mr. Seymount; give me
" leave to relate it.—I ſhall be grieved, indeed,
" to mention my mother's behaviour to me,
" but you are entitled to my confidence, be-
" cauſe your carriage has been ſo very gen-
" teel."

He aſſured me, that he ſhould liſten to my ſtory with the greateſt ſatisfaction. He *did* liſten to it with tolerable patience, but he changed colour ſeveral times while I, neceſſarily, declared my eſteem, and even my affection for Lord Woodford, and more than once, attempted to open his lips to interrupt me. When I con-

concluded with telling him, that Lady Woodford had perſuaded me to marry ſome other man, and that I had not returned her a deciſive anſwer, he cleared up again, and I ſaw hope ſparkle in his eyes.

When I ceaſed ſpeaking, he replied, "All "that you have ſaid, Miſs Oſgood (for that "name ſeems now to be more agreeable to "you than Wanley) only tends to render you "more amiable than ever in my eyes. Your "perſon is more lovely, your mind is charmingly improved ſince I firſt knew you.—I "cannot, therefore, relinquiſh my firſt claim "to your heart. Lord Woodford has, I ſee "plainly, made a deep impreſſion upon it, but "as Lady Woodford will, moſt certainly, con"tinue to oppoſe your marriage with her ſon, "you cannot expect to be united to him; and "you will act a kind of part with regard to "his lordſhip, by giving him up."

"That is as he happens to think," replied I; "every thing I am ready to do for Lord "Woodford's honour, but I cannot make him "wretched."

For ſome time our converſation was carried on in this diſputing ſtrain. Seymount, at laſt, obſerving that what he advanced to bring me over to his own way of thinking, made me unhappy, entered upon a new ſubject, and ſtrove to make his company agreeable: he really was a very pleaſing companion. Among other things, he told me, that he never ſhould have gone off in ſo ſtrange a manner, had not his father, having found him out, contrived to decoy him on board a ſhip, in which he was cloſely confined till he ſailed for Italy.—"From "Italy," continued he, "I wrote ſeveral letters

" to you, but I ſuppoſe, as you had changed " your name, and place of abode, you never " received them."

On my aſſuring him, that I had not received a line from him after his abrupt departure, he thus proceeded.

" On the death of my uncle who had made " me his heir, I returned to England, as ſoon " as poſſible. Immediately upon my arrival, " I took no ſmall pains to diſcover where *you* " reſided; and I ſtill hope that my future life " will be ſpent in promoting *your* felicity."

I only replied with a bow. He then kiſſed my hand, and took his leave, ſaying that he believed he had tired me; adding, that I ſhould make him very happy by permitting him to wait on me the day following.

I neither aſſented to his coming the next day, nor oppoſed it. I was really not prepared for ſuch an attack. Seymount, though handſome, and agreeable, had an eaſy aſſurance in his manner, and proceeded always with ſo much rapidity, that you had no time to put yourſelf upon your guard: he did almoſt what he pleaſed with you.

When he was gone, I had leiſure to reflect upon the converſation which had paſſed between us.—I ſtill loved Lord Woodford to exceſs, yet I conſidered that I ſhould diſcover my affection for him in the beſt way, by diſpoſing of myſelf agreeably to Lady Woodford's wiſhes. But then again, I conſidered whether there was a neceſſity for me to make myſelf wretched during the remainder of my life to oblige her ladyſhip? Whether my refuſing to marry Lord Woodford would not be ſufficient? " Beſides, " can I, ſtill preferring my lord to his whole " ſex,

" ſex, with any degree of propriety, promiſe
" to love and obey another man? Impoſſible—
" And muſt we both be rendered miſerable for
" life, becauſe one of us has perſiſted to in-
" dulge a paſſion, the gratification of which
" is prohibited by diſcretion?—Why, after all,
" can I not love Seymount? He is young, he
" is handſome, his manners are very winning,
" and he has given very ſtrong proofs of his
" affection for me, of his conſtancy.—How
" affectionate, how conſtant has Lord Wood-
" ford been!—But I ſhall, unqueſtionably, in-
" jure him, by conſenting to be his Wife.
" Now, according to Seymount's declaration,
" I ſhall be in no ſhape diſagreeable to his
" family.—As to the fortune and the rank of
" the two gentlemen, I trouble not myſelf
" about them: I know I could be happier with
" Lord Woodford were he a private man,
" and maſter only of a cottage, than with
" Seymount, had he a ducal coronet and a
" palace."

In few words, I wavered ſo long between love and diſcretion, that I became almoſt incapable of thinking at all, and therefore endeavoured to baniſh both my lovers from my mind, till I could bring myſelf to reaſon more clearly about them.—Vain were all my endeavours of that kind.

Seymount kept his appointment. Among a number of fine ſpeeches, he told me that he had mentioned me to his father in the manner I deſerved, tho' he had not been able to do juſtice to my merit; adding, that his father approved of his choice.

I ſighed at this information; " I am afraid," ſaid I, " that you ſuppreſſed ſome part of my " ſtory."

"Not a ſyllable," replied he, "I related "every circumſtance which you communicated "to me, and my father thinks with me, that "a lady who has conducted herſelf ſo pru- "dently in ſo many trying ſituations muſt, ne- "ceſſarily, make an exemplary wife.—Let me, "therefore, my charming Miſs Oſgood, hope "that you will ſoon bleſs me with your hand" —ſeizing it with ardour.

This was too much—I drew it back inſtantly: I found myſelf exceedingly fluttered. To put an end to a converſation which became too embarraſſing, I replied, with a ſerious countenance, "I cannot, indeed I cannot do as you "would have me, Mr. Seymount; though I "never intend to marry Lord Woodford, I "cannot give my hand to any other man—I "am bound by a ſolemn promiſe, and will on "no account whatever infringe it."

"Well but, when he is certain that you are "determined never to marry him, how cruelly "will he act by inſiſting upon your keeping ſo "haſty a promiſe, made, no doubt, before you "had reflected upon the exceſſive abſurdity "of it!"

I returned no reply: a thouſand diſagreeable reflections crowded into my mind; reflections which I had endeavoured to drive from it.

Seymount, perceiving my embarraſſment, gave a turn to the converſation. He exerted himſelf, indeed, with ſo much alacrity to entertain me, that his lively efforts prevented me from dwelling upon occurrences which I could not remember without painful ſenſations: and he diſplayed ſo many various talents, that the time ſlipped away imperceptibly.—He departed

departed at a late hour, and left me in ſo confuſed a ſtate, that I could not ſit down to reaſon calmly about any thing. I only recollect that I paſſed a ſleepleſs night.

The next morning I roſe more attached to Lord Woodford than ever, notwithſtanding what Seymount had ſaid and done to recommend himſelf to me.—The day was ſpent pretty nearly as the foregoing one had been. The only pleaſure I received while the hours heavily ſucceeded each other, was from the abſence of Seymount: he began to grow troubleſome.—Finding that I could not poſſibly, bring myſelf to accept of his generous offer, I reſolved to tell him plainly ſo the next time I ſaw him, and ſo put a ſto[illegible], entirely, to his dangling after me.

As ſoon as I had made this reſolution, I wiſhed to ſee him, that I might give him a deciſive anſwer; I had not wiſhed to ſee him till *that* moment ſince the renewal of our acquaintance. I wanted to ſee him *once more*, and *no more*.

As the day advanced I grew reſtleſs, and my anxiety, tho' nothing had happened to make me particularly uneaſy, was doubled towards the evening. I went to bed without any inclination to ſleep. However between four and five o'clock, I fell into a doſe: I was ſoon waked from it by Mrs. Stevens, who told me that Lord Woodford's gentleman was below, and earneſtly deſired to ſee me.

I ſtarted up, and rubbed my eyes—I could hardly tell whether I heard right or not—I could not, any way, account for Lord Woodford's ſervant coming to me in the night upon buſineſs of ſuch importance as to require my

being waked.—I feared that he had been taken ill ſuddenly, and therefore, haſtily, cried, while I was hurrying on my cloaths, "How is "my Lord!—Where is he?"

"Mr. Cowley will deliver his meſſage to no-"body but yourſelf, madam," ſaid Kitty; "and he begs you would make haſte."

This anſwer alarmed me ſtill more. I ran down ſtairs with my cloaths half on and half off.

As ſoon as I came into the parlour, Mr. Cowley begged my pardon for having frightened me.—"I am very uneaſy madam," ſaid he, "becauſe I am afraid my Lord is bent upon an "action which may turn out fatal to him, and "if he is I don't know who can ſave him from "it but *you*, Madam; your perſuaſions will "have weight with him, for I am pretty ſure "that you are the cauſe of the quarrel."

"Quarrel?" ſaid I, trembling—"what? "who?—carry me to him, Sir,—if *my* life "can ſave *his* it ſhall be freely ſacrificed."

"I have a coach at the door madam," replied he, "and if you pleaſe I will wait on you "to his lordſhip."

Mrs. Stevens who was preſent at this ſhort, but very intereſting converſation, having riſen when I was called, ſeeing me look exceedingly terrified, propoſed to accompany me; and I gladly, for many reaſons, accepted of her kind offer.

While we were going to my lord's, Mr. Cowley told us, that a young gentleman, of the name of Seymount, had been twice with Lord Woodford the preceding day, and that a note which his lordſhip received from him on the evening of that day had determined him to

ſend

ſend for his lawyer immediately.—" My lord," continued he " ordered himſelf to be called " at four o'clock in the morning—Before he " went to bed he wrote a letter, and directed " it to be ſent to you if he neither returned, " nor diſpatched a meſſage by ten o' clock. By " theſe proceedings, all in a hurry, I was very " much alarmed, and ventured to prevail on " his lordſhip, as he had honoured me with " his confidence upon many occaſions, not to " meet his adverſary, but to no purpoſe; on " the contrary, my lord finding me refracto- " ry, threatened to diſcharge me if I would " not be ſilent. As I could not therefore per- " ſuade my lord to liſten to me, I ſtole out, " called a coach, and hurried to fetch *you*, " Madam, hoping that, by the influence you " have over my lord, you might make him " willing to compromiſe the affair between " him and Mr. Seymount without fighting."

This intelligence, you may imagine, was ſufficient to diſtract me; I became, indeed, almoſt frantic.

On our arrival at my lord's houſe we were told, that he had been gone out above half an hour.

Wild with grief, I fooliſhly attempted to throw myſelf out of the coach to run after him; but Cowley and Mrs. Stevens ſtopped me; informing me that I ſhould get to the place I wanted to be at much ſooner in a carriage than on foot.—I did but faintly hear what they ſaid. I permitted Cowley, however, to order the coach to Hyde-Park, and to bid the fellow drive as faſt as poſſible.—All the way he went I cried out, with my hands claſped, " O! my God!—ſave him!—ſave him!—

" we ſhall be too late—He will be murdered " before we come to his aſſiſtance."

At laſt the coach approached the ſpot to which Cowley had ordered it.

Putting out my head, I ſcreamed.

At a little diſtance we perceived two men. Cowley bade the coachman ſtop. I jumped out—I cannot tell how—I ſaw my lord, my dear lord and Seymount thruſting at each other.

I ran—I flew between their ſwords.

My lord called out, loudly, " Hold, Sey- " mount—'tis Fanny" — He then, throwing away his ſword, caught me in his arms—— " My dear girl," ſaid he.

I heard no more—Terror, Love, Joy—a thouſand mixed emotions deprived me of my ſenſes.

I did not recover my intellects till I was in the coach: I then found myſelf ſupported by Lord Woodford, who called upon me in the tendereſt accents.

I raiſed my languid head, charmed with the ſound of his melodious voice, and aſked him—but with much difficulty—" if he was " hurt."

" Not at all, my Fanny," replied he.

" Do not ſay ſo—do not ſay ſo"—perceiving Blood upon his ruffles.—" Do not deceive me "—You are wounded—indeed you are."

" 'Tis but a ſcratch," ſaid he; " you have " ſaved my honour, and my life: and I will " ſpend the remainder of the life you have " preſerved in perpetual endeavours to make " you happy."

I made no anſwer: I only ſighed: I was too much affected to talk at that time—My head had

had reſted on my lord's boſom, but when I came ſufficiently to myſelf to be ſenſible of my ſituation, I attempted to raiſe it: I found, however, that I was too weak, ſo violently had I been agitated.

My lord, having watched me with the tendereſt attention, threw his arm round my neck to place my head where it was before, and I was totally incapable of making any reſiſtance.

In this ſituation we reached Lady Woodford's houſe, who was, with Lady Anne in the hall, extremely inquiſitive about her ſon, having heard that he had been challenged; and the confuſed report had prodigiouſly alarmed her.

My Lord lifted me out of the coach, and led me into the parlour. His mother and ſiſter hung about him, and aſked a hundred queſtions, aſtoniſhed no doubt at the ſight of *me*.

"Fanny, madam," replied my lord, to his mother, "has ſaved my life: and the remain-
"der of my days ſhall be ſpent with *her*, never
"will we be ſeparated again."

This ſpeech I heard, but very faintly heard, while I ſat upon the ſopha on which my lord had placed me, ſo little was I recovered from my fright.

Lady Woodford, throwing her arms round her ſon's neck, cried, "It ſhall be ſo—My joy
"on ſeeing you ſafe, will make me conſent to
"any thing: if Fanny has really preſerved
"your life, may you be happy together! But
"tell me how all this happened?"

"Excuſe me, my dear madam," replied my lord, "at preſent, but accept of my ſincere
"thanks for your approbation—I cannot taſte
"any joy till this amiable girl is recovered

" from the diſorder which her affection for me " occaſioned."

Then ſnatching me to his boſom, he cried, " Fanny, my life, my all, be comforted; I " am in no danger now, and my mother ap- " proves my choice—look up, and tell me " that you alſo approve it, and that it is in my " power to make you happy."

I felt the tender preſſure to his generous breaſt; but was, for ſome time inſenſible to all that he, Lady Woodford, and Lady Anne, could do towards my recovery.—I opened my eyes—I heard all the conſoling ſpeeches which were addreſſed to me, but I could not utter a ſyllable. I looked ſteadily at my Lord, who ſat by me, holding my hand and gazing on me with inexpreſſible tenderneſs.—I heard him ſay to Lady Woodford, and to Lady Anne, in melancholy accents, " I fear ſhe is too deep- " ly affected.—Poor girl! what has ſhe ſuffer- " ed for *me?* can I ever repay her, ſhould ſhe " recover?" added he, with a heart breaking ſigh—The ladies endeavoured to give him hopes of my being better ſoon, but he did not ſeem to believe them: ſaying to himſelf ſoftly—" I " am afraid I have been too precipitate—ſhe " has been exceſſively hurried."

Lady Woodford and Mrs. Stevens then with- drew. My lord ſaid to Lady Anne, " Do " pray, ſiſter, call for a little wine and water."

While ſhe was gone to order it, my lord again ſtrained me to his boſom with an ardor equally ariſing, I thought, from affection and from grief. By that procedure my wiſhes to relieve him were increaſed—I made a ſtrong effort to ſpeak; I opened my lips but my words died

died away upon them.—I could only preſs his hand.

The ſervant appearing at that inſtant at the door, Lady Anne took the glaſs from him, and bringing it to me, herſelf, whiſpered ſomething to perſuade me to drink, but in an endearing voice, which excited new ſenſations.—On a cloſer view of that lovely perſon, whom I had once beheld with ſo much jealouſy, I was charmed with her beautiful appearance; doubly charmed to behold the ſiſter of the man to whom I was, with the conſent of his family, going to be united—to behold her ſo ſweetly condeſcending; ſo kindly officious about me—I was in ſuch a violent agitation upon the occaſion that I burſt into tears—the tears of joy—the tears of gratitude. By *them* I was immediately relieved. I then attempted to make Lady Anne *ſome* acknowledgment for her polite behaviour to me.

"You will have time enough, my deareſt "girl," ſaid my lord, "to thank Lady Anne, "hereafter; at preſent, conſider *me* a little: "and think how impatiently I wiſh to hear "you confeſs what you have hitherto con-"cealed from me; reſtrained, I hope, by no-"thing but diſcretion:"

"What would you have me confeſs my "lord?" anſwered I, in a faultering voice, and with a look which expreſſed all that my tender heart felt for him.

"Your love for me, Fanny," replied he, eagerly.

"Have not I a thouſand times made *that* "confeſſion with my eyes?"

"You have, you have," cried he, cloſely embracing me—Then, taking Lady Anne, who

who was going to leave us, by the hand, "Let me," continued he, "unite two ſiſters, "who will be as nearly related to each other "in their perſons, when I am rendered the "happieſt of men, as they are in their tem-"pers."

Lady Woodford and Mrs. Stevens now returned to us. My lord left me, for a moment, to acquaint his mother with the ſatisfaction ſhe had afforded him by conſenting to his marriage. Penetrated by her condeſcenſion, I would have paid my thanks to her in the humbleſt manner: but both ſhe and my lord prevented me.

"Sit down, Fanny," ſaid my lady, placing herſelf on the other ſide of me, "and compoſe "yourſelf while my ſon tells us how he came "to quarrel with Mr. Seymount."

"Being informed, yeſterday morning," ſaid his lordſhip, "that a gentleman, called Sey-"mount deſired to ſpeak with me, I recollect-"ed the name immediately.—I had, you know, "Fanny, ſuffered no ſmall uneaſineſs at one "time on his account—I, therefore, gave or-"ders for his admiſſion. He accoſted me with "great politeneſs, and told me that he found "I had pretenſions to a lady with whom he "was extremely enamoured. I have been aſ-"ſured by the lady herſelf," continued he, "that ſhe never intended to marry your lord-"ſhip, but that ſhe has unfortunately pro-"miſed you never to marry any other man: "My buſineſs then my lord, is to intreat you "to releaſe Miſs Oſgood from her promiſe; "you will act cruelly by confining her to a "ſingle life, merely becauſe ſhe declined an "alliance with you from the moſt generous "motives."—"This addreſs to me was hand-

"ſomely

" ſomely delivered, but had it been delivered
" with the voice of an angel it would not
" have been ſufficiently perſuaſive to make me
" give up my Fanny.—" I will never give her
" up, Sir, replied I, but with my life: eſpe-
" cially as I have ſtrong reaſons to believe that
" every thing will be in time ſettled to our
" mutual ſatisfaction.—He appeared to be not
" at all pleaſed with my anſwer, and ſaid ſo
" much about the impropriety of my marrying
" Miſs Oſgood, that I began to think he grew
" exceedingly troubleſome—I could not help
" letting him know that I found him very im-
" pertinent. He left me abruptly. In the
" evening I received an inſulting letter from
" him, in which he appointed a meeting in
" Hyde-Park.—I was extremely unwilling to
" draw my ſword upon ſuch an occaſion; but,
" had I refuſed compliance with Mr. Sey-
" mount's challenge, I ſhould have been more
" expoſed, and in a more mortifying manner
" to his inſolence. I therefore made proper
" arrangements before I ſet out upon my ex-
" pedition.—I left a letter for *you* Miſs Oſgood,
" and then proceeded to the place nominated
" for our hoſtile interview. I had previouſly
" determined however, to ſay all in my power
" to deter my antagoniſt from giving a looſe
" to a reſentment which he had abſurdly en-
" couraged, as he could not rationally, have
" any thing to do with the engagements of a
" lady with whom he had no connection; as
" he could not with any propriety, diſpute her
" prepoſſeſſion in favour of another man. But
" when I met my gentleman, he was in too
" great a hurry to liſten to reaſon; to hear
" me ſpeak, indeed—He drew his ſword before

I was

" I was ready to defend myſelf; for I reſolved
" not to proceed to action without compulſion.
" He ruſhed upon me with ſuch fury, that I
" had not time to ſave myſelf, with all my ad-
" dreſs, from the point of his weapon: I only
" received, however, a ſlight ſcratch upon my
" wriſt, but I probably ſhould have the ſword
" through my body, at the next thruſt, if
" Fanny had not arrived moſt ſeaſonably to
" my relief; I mean, to put an end to a very
" diſagreeable affair which might have been
" attended with conſequences fatal to Sey-
" mount or to me, and perhaps to both.—
" Yet welcome as my Fanny's arrival was to
" me, I was inexpreſſibly terrified when I ſaw
" her running between our ſwords: and little
" leſs was my anxiety on her account, when
" I ſaw her fainting in my arms.—Seymount
" alſo, appeared to be extremely ſhocked at
" her ſituation, and ſaid, with a voice expreſ-
" ſive of the deepeſt diſcontent, " I perceive
" my lord, that you are the happy man, and
" that were I to be maſter of the *field*, I ſhould
" never be able to win the *lady*."—Mrs. Ste-
" vens, after having aſſiſted *me*—Seymount,
" alſo, joined his aſſiſtance, and endeavoured to
" recover my deareſt girl—Finding that ſhe
" was in a ſtrong fit, ſhe propoſed to have her
" lifted into the coach, which might carry us
" all, ſhe ſaid, to you madam"—turning to
Lady Woodford, " if I pleaſed, as you had
" certainly heard of the intended duel, and
" muſt have been, conſequently, very much
" alarmed about me. I readily aſſented to ſo
" reaſonable a propoſal, as I reſolved never to
" be again ſeparated from my Fanny. Sey-
" mount helped us to place her in the coach,

" but

" but excuſed himſelf from attending us, tho' " he aſked my permiſſion to call and enquire " after Miſs Oſgood's health, a piece of civility " to which I could not well return a forbid- " ding anſwer. This madam," bowing to his mother, " is the real hiſtory of my expedition " to Hyde-Park this morning; and as it has " produced your approbation with regard to " the woman of my heart, as I ſee my deareſt " girl recovered from her fright on my ac- " count, I ſhall ever remember it without re- " gret."

Lady Woodford, after having liſtened with the ſtricteſt attention to the above intereſting narrative, declared herſelf very well ſatisfied with the concluſion of it.—Rejoiced to ſee her ſon again unhurt; ſhe was alſo very much pleaſed to find that he had not wounded his adverſary. From the natural benevolence of her diſpoſition, ſhe would have been conſiderably pained if any of her family had occaſioned diſtreſsful ſituations in any other.

As to myſelf, who had the greateſt reaſon in the world to exult at the happineſs around me, to which I had been fortunately inſtrumental, as well as at my own particular felicity. I ſat ſilently contented, and abſolutely incapable of articulating my feelings.—I could only utter monoſyllables—now and then a *Yes;* now and then a *No.*

As ſoon as I recovered from the delirium of joy into which I had been thrown by the above mentioned proceedings in my favour, I endeavoured to expreſs the gratitude of my heart in the ſtrongeſt terms: but my lord ſtopped me, in the tendereſt manner imaginable; and indeed, while I liſtened with greedy ears, to the

the many flattering things he ſaid to me, I was not in the leaſt deſirous of interrupting him —I gave myſelf up to the enjoyment of the moſt delicious ſenſations I had ever felt. Often did my lord exclaim, while he ſat by me, Fanny my deareſt girl, you ſay nothing—Are you not recovered? will your ſpirits never return? I could only reply to ſuch fond queſtions by tender glances, by affectionate preſſures of his hand—I appeared, indeed, ſo deeply affected by the change in my ſituation, that Lady Woodford more than once, told her ſon, upon his earneſtly deſiring to know how I did, not to hurry me: adding that nothing but time could reſtore my former tranquility.

For ſome days my joy was ſo exceſſive, that I hardly eat or ſlept; and diſagreeable conſequences were apprehended by all the family, from the very event which had ſo long and ſo earneſtly been wiſhed for by Lord Woodford, and I will honeſtly own, by myſelf.—However my lord *would* hurry the preparations for the ceremony which was to unite us for ever, and even chid me, ſeveral times for not appearing in as much haſte; telling me that I had never loved ſo truly as he did, and that there was an impatience diſcoverable in the moſt delicate woman upon a ſimilar occaſion, to which I ſeemed to be an utter ſtranger. I ſometimes laughed off his gentle reproaches; ſometimes, indeed, they were ſo warm that they brought tears into my eyes: whenever he ſaw them he wiped them away with apologies, which failed not to make me ſincerely forgive him for every diſquieting emotion which he, quite unintentionally, I am ſure, occaſioned.

Seymount,

Seymount made us a viſit one day, after our meeting in Hyde-Park; he behaved with great politeneſs: a reſpectful tenderneſs ſeemed to have ſucceeded the *violent paſſion* which he had profeſſed for me. He aſked my pardon; he aſked my lord's pardon, and ſolicited his friendſhip.—"I do not abſolutely deſpair of yours, "madam," added he, (turning to me) "with "my lord's approbation."

I made no reply to thoſe words, but my lord declared that as he was completely happy himſelf, he had it not in his power to refuſe his friendſhip to the man who had tho' undeſignedly, been inſtrumental to his felicity; and that he therefore deſired the continuance of his acquaintance.

Lady Anne appeared, I thought, to be entirely of her brother's opinion, and to be alſo exceedingly pleaſed with Seymount's company, who treated her with a polite deference highly inſinuating. Lady Woodford, too, did not look as if ſhe was diſſatisfied with her daughter's viſible partiality in his favour.

Seymount was genteel, well-bred, ſenſible, and agreeable; and as Mr. Seymount, his father was poſſeſſed of a very large eſtate, he might without any impropriety, with his independent fortune and his expectations, aſpire to an alliance with Lady Anne, who was a very amiable creature: her perſonal charms were attractive: She had an exceeding good underſtanding; and and ſhe had many ſhining accompliſhments: her good nature, ſuper-added to her other attractions, rendered her completely alluring.

Lady Anne exerted herſelf to convince me that ſhe ſincerely approved of me for a ſiſter: it was her whole ſtudy to make herſelf agreeable

to

to me: to make every thing, indeed, about me, appear in an agreeable light.

At my lord's particular deſire, I remained at Lady Woodford's from the day I was brought to her houſe from Hyde-Park. As ſoon as I began to recover my health and ſpirits, I was introduced to all my lady's company in the character of her ſon's *ward;* I was, therefore, treated in every reſpect, as a young perſon of equal rank with thoſe who protected me. Lady Woodford furniſhed every thing fit for my appearance in her family; but my dreſs took up the leaſt part of my attention—I was more ſolicitous to acquire manners ſuitable to the ſtation to which I was going to be raiſed: animated by ſuch a ſolicitude, I naturally applied to Lord Woodford for his friendly advice; being very well aſſured, that by following his inſtructions, I ſhould become more and more qualified to appear to advantage as his wife; free from many little awkwardneſſes which excite laughter, if not contempt among people of faſhion. When I acquainted him with my wiſhes of this kind, his charming countenance was brightened with a bewitching ſmile, and he replied, leading me to the glaſs—"Of all "women in the world Fanny, you need not "be apprehenſive of appearing in an awkward "light any where.—I wiſh not to have you "more poliſhed than you are in any reſpect, "leſt you ſhould loſe that enchanting ſimpli-"city which I adore, which I never yet ſaw "in ſo amiable a degree in any of your ſex."

Pardon me, my dear friend, for repeating thoſe encomiums:—when you recollect that they were laviſhed on me by Lord Woodford, you will not think that I can repeat them too often.

Deter-

Determined to make my lord's pleaſure the chief object of my attention, I continued to avail myſelf of all thoſe little ways which had proved ſo winning to him, in private; but when I mixed in the *great world*, I endeavoured to copy the behaviour of Lady Woodford, and Lady Anne with minuteneſs; conſidering them as ſtandards for taſte and politeneſs; yet without affecting to imitate their manners and high breeding, that I might not be thought eager to aſſume the airs of a woman of quality. In a ſhort time I found myſelf quite eaſy in my new ſphere of life: grandeur became familiar to me; I was only afraid that I ſhould not be able to keep the affections of the man whom I adored.—Not that I ſuſpected my lord's honour; not that I doubted his conſtancy; but as he had taken a ſudden fancy to *me*, I could not help being apprehenſive that he might feel as ſudden an inclination for *another woman;* I was not perfectly eaſy, neither, with regard to Miſs Bromfield, whom I really pitied—How could I forbear pitying the woman whom Lord Woodford had rejected!—Yet I feared ſhe might, one day, make repriſals on me. I had heard of many men who, after having refuſed women, in a manner forced upon them, had been ſenſible of their error, and found them exceedingly pleaſing. The dread of ſuch a change in my lord, in the man on whom I doated, tended to keep me humble, and prompted me to venture to aſk him how Miſs Bromfield did, and whether he had really beheld her with eyes of indifference.

He, frankly, replied, that ſhe never had appeared to him the ſort of woman whom he could love: adding, that on his believing my affections

affections to be fixed upon Mr. Sheffield, he had endeavoured to repair the loſs he had ſuſtained by a new attachment, but that an hours converſation with Miſs Bromfield had convinced him he could not have any connections with her—He concluded with ſaying, that he was extremely glad he had not given her any reaſon to ſuppoſe he particularly liked her.

Thus you ſee, my dear friend, my lord's conduct was perfectly regular and conſiſtent, honourable and juſt. However, the more ſatisfied I was with *him*, the more diſſatisfied was I with *myſelf*; becauſe I thought I was not worthy of the ſplendor and felicity which I was going to enjoy with him.—I could not help wiſhing, ſometimes, that my birth had been more ſuitable to his, leſt he ſhould, in a moment of diſcontent, reproach himſelf for what he had done for me. Theſe reflections naturally brought my mother to my mind. I ſighed to think that ſhe had not been capable of feeling for me what parents—not diveſted of humanity—generally feel for their children. Never did I obſerve the affectionate behaviour of Lady Woodford to Lady Anne, without recollecting the firſt longings of my infancy when I yearned for that maternal tenderneſs which I had never experienced. Yet I was reſolved, unkindly as I had been treated by my mother, to endeavour to make her life quite comfortable, if poſſible, as ſoon as I had it in my power.

Lord Woodford, having ſurprized me, one day, in a very ſerious humour, and rather with a melancholy appearance, occaſioned by the recollection of what had paſſed, relating to myſelf

myſelf, during my infant years, inſiſted upon my telling him the cauſe of my dejection, and when I informed him of it, he intreated me to be quite contented, as every thing ſhould be done to make my mother ſatisfied with me; adding, that I ſhould not, by being *his* wife, be prevented from paying the duty of a daughter, tho' my mother had not merited ſo much attention from me.

" Indeed, my lord," replied I " I am great-
" ly indebted to her, notwithſtanding the
" treatment I have received from her, for
" having educated me in a manner which has
" rendered me worthy of your lordſhip's no-
" tice."

My lord declared himſelf enchanted with my ſentiments, but told me, that he would not own my mother had done any thing towards forming my character: imputing all the merit on which he complimented me, to my innate goodneſs of heart.

The day, at laſt, arrived, deſtined for the completion of my happineſs. My lord, generouſly, ſettled a thouſand a year on me, and allowed me the three hundred, already mentioned, for pin money: he alſo preſented a thouſand pounds to me for cloaths, and a moſt brilliant ſet of jewels. For all theſe proofs of his liberality, I returned him my ſincereſt thanks: the preſents were valuable in themſelves, but the hand of the giver made them doubly ſo in my eyes.

I deſired Mrs. Stevens to let me have Kitty to wait on me, as my lord and I, both, eſteemed her for her attachment to me; and her miſtreſs chearfully parted with her. Kitty, the faithful Kitty (now Mrs. Maxwell, with whom you

you are well acquainted) was dreſſing my hair early when my lord came to go with us to church, as he had always ſlept at his own houſe.

Very ſoon afterwards one of the ſervants appeared, and ſaid to me, "Somebody wants "to ſpeak with you, madam."

"Well," replied Kitty, who, immediately ſaw the impropriety of admitting a viſitor on the very morning of my wedding day, "and "did not you tell the perſon that Miſs Oſgood "was engaged and could not be ſeen?"

"I *did*" replied he, "but ſhe ſays that ſhe "has buſineſs of the utmoſt conſequence, and "will not leave the houſe."

This unexpected importunity, at ſuch a time, alarmed me exceedingly. I feared that ſome cruel accident had happened to deſtroy my happineſs: I trembled, and could not ſpeak—But what became of me when I ſaw my mother enter my dreſſing-room and advance towards me!

I ſunk back in my chair, from which I had made a fruitleſs effort to riſe, and could only look on her with the greateſt aſtoniſhment.

Without the leaſt, apparent, diſcompoſure, ſhe cried, "So, Miſs, I have found you at "laſt: I ſuppoſe you do not in the leaſt ima-"gine, that as you are under age, by ſome "years, your mother's conſent to your marri-"age is neceſſary."

I was extremely diſconcerted, ſtill more ſo at the intimidating manner in which ſhe addreſſed herſelf to me; but the appearance of Lord Woodford, who at that inſtant, entered the room, reſtored me to the full poſſeſſion of my faculties, and encouraged me to reply, riſing at the

the ſame time, "You would have been con-
"ſulted, Madam, undoubtedly, upon this oc-
"caſion, had I thought it poſſible for you not
"to be tranſported with the honour Lord
"Woodford is ready to do me, by making me
"his wife."

"I *may*, certainly, be brought to conſent," anſwered ſhe, with an affected haughtineſs, "upon *ſome* conditions."

"You have no right to make any conditi-
"ons," ſaid a perſon, immediately, whom I had not, in my confuſion, obſerved. "*Char-*
"*lotte*—for that lady's name is not *Frances*—
"owes you no duty; you are not her mother."

Here was aſtoniſhment not to be deſcribed. We all ſeemed ſtruck dumb, while the perſon who ſpoke laſt, (and in whom both my lord and I recognized Mrs Burdet) proceeded in the following terms, addreſſing herſelf to my lord; to Lady Woodford alſo, and to Lady Anne, who had by this time, joined us.—"This young
"lady—looking at *me*—was delivered to me
"to be nurſed when ſhe was not above a fort-
"night old, by a woman who ſaid ſhe had
"reaſons for keeping her birth a ſecret; ſhe
"gave me ten guineas with her, charged me to
"be careful of her, as ſhe would, in a proper
"time, be demanded, and added, that her
"name was Charlotte Selwyn: I had alſo a
"daughter of this Mrs. Wanley's to nurſe, of
"the name of Frances, who had never been
"much taken notice of by her mother, and
"who died about two months after Miſs Char-
"lotte was brought to me: Mrs. Wanley was
"then in the country. My huſband and I,
"firmly believing that Miſs Charlotte would
"be left upon our hands, as nobody had en-

quired

" quired after her, agreed to put her off upon
" Mrs. Wanley for her own daughter, as they
" were nearly of an age, and not much un-
" like each other.—Pray God forgive me for
" this fraud! it was my firſt ſin.—Mrs. Wan-
" ley, at the uſual time, carried home her
" ſuppoſed daughter. Not long afterwards,
" my huſband died, and I was taken into an
" old gentlewoman's family to wait upon her:
" a diſtant relation of hers, a kind of Gen-
" tleman, tho' with a very ſmall fortune, took
" a liking to me, but demurred about marry-
" ing me, becauſe I had been in ſo low a ſtati-
" on of life as to nurſe children: to remove
" his objections, I told him that few people
" knew I had been ſo employed, and that I
" could ſilence even thoſe.—In ſhort, I pre-
" vailed on him to marry me, but as I married
" him entirely for what little he had, we lived
" very unhappily together—On his dying with-
" out a will, I came in only for my thirds,
" which were too ſmall for my ſubſiſtence, I
" therefore took a houſe and let lodgings.
" However before my laſt huſband died, I met
" Mrs. Wanley in the ſtreet near her own
" own houſe; ſhe ſpoke to me, and aſked me
" if I would go home with her, and ſee
" Fanny. I heſitated at firſt, but afterwards
" conſented, thinking that a refuſal might
" create ſuſpicions; I only deſired Mrs. Wan-
" ley not to mention to her daughter, or any
" body elſe, that I had ever taken in nurſe
" children, on Mr. Burdet's account. I found
" Miſs Fanny, whom I knew to be Charlotte,
" by a mole under her right ear, grown a very
" fine girl, and I was, at that time glad to ſee
" ſhe had been ſo well managed: Yet I was

ſurprized

" ſurprized in two or three years after, during
" which I had more than once, called at Mrs.
" Wanley's, to meet her in the ſtreet, running
" from her mother, who had, ſhe told me,
" agreed to ſell her to Sir Thomas Combes,
" and intreating me to protect her. Thinking,
" at firſt, that ſhe would be a trouble to me,
" I refuſed, but on ſecond thoughts, conſider-
" ing that I had received money for the care
" of her when ſhe was an infant, and that
" hardly any of it had been ſpent upon her, I
" gave her leave to go home with me. She
" painted flowers for her livelihood, till Mrs.
" Wanley, finding ſhe was at my houſe, came
" and told me Sir Thomas would give me a
" handſome ſum if I would connive at his car-
" rying her off. I am aſhamed to own that I
" could not reſiſt the temptation thrown in my
" way.—I pretended to have a fall near the ba-
" ker's who ſerved me, and ſent for her from
" thence on purpoſe to decoy her into the
" ſtreet: but I was puniſhed for my wicked-
" neſs. She was reſcued, as I afterwards heard,
" by this gentleman—(turning to Lord Wood-
" ford) and Mrs. Wanley would not ſuffer Sir
" Thomas to pay me for my trouble. Soon
" after this event, I was ſeized with a violent
" fit of the ſtone which brought me to the
" brink of the grave, and made me think ſe-
" rioufly of all my ſins: yet though I deceived
" Mrs. Wanley into the bringing up this child
" as her own, I conſidered that ſhe had de-
" ſerved to be deceived for her unnatural be-
" haviour to her: but when I reflected on my
" having conſented to betray the poor innocent
" girl, at her age, into the hands of Sir The-
" mas, my conſcience bitterly reproached me,

" and during the violent pangs I felt, while I
" lay racked with my diſorder, I was often
" tempted to diſcover all I knew about Miſs
" Charlotte, tho' I could not tell to whom
" nor what advantage my diſcovery would be
" of to her. A few weeks ago, when I was
" confined to my bed, a perſon came to ſee
" me, and aſked me if I remembered her, ad-
" ding, What is become of Charlotte Selwyn,
" whom I brought you to nurſe about eighteen
" years ago?—I ſtarted at the queſtion, and
" was once tempted to ſay that ſhe died an
" infant, as nobody could diſprove ſuch a
" declaration; but a ſudden pang came acroſs
" me, and made me reſolve to confeſs the
" truth, which I did: aſſuring her, however,
" at the ſame time, that I acted, as I thought,
" for the beſt by placing her with Mrs. Wanley,
" but I was ſilent upon the attempt to carry
" her off; I only ſaid that ſhe had left me,
" and that I knew nothing concerning her.
" Laſt night the ſame perſon came again—" I
" have heard, ſaid ſhe, an imperfect ſtory with
" regard to the lady whom Lord Woodford is
" going to marry; they tell me ſhe is Mrs.
" Wanley's daughter; therefore, if you have
" not deceived me, this lady muſt be Charlotte
" Selwyn."—As I was then a little better, I
" offered to go with her to Mrs. Wanley, to
" aſk her what ſhe knew of the matter, and I
" told her what I have now related: ſhe replied,
" If what you have told me is true, you de-
" ſerve to be hanged; but I am ſure you have
" invented this tale to ſerve ſome bad purpoſe,
" and I will have nothing to do with you; I
" deſire you won't think of troubling Lord
" and Lady Woodford with ſuch an idle ſtory,
" as

" as my lord's family will then refuſe their " conſent to marry a girl owned by nobody." " Mrs. Clayton anſwered, " Miſs Charlotte, " madam, has a father living, who will, I " hope, own her: he is very able to give her " a fortune, and his name is Seymount."

No words can deſcribe the aſtoniſhment of all preſent at the concluſion of Mrs. Burdet's intelligence. As for my lord and myſelf, we were equally apprehenſive of a diſcovery which might ſeparate us for ever.—We looked full of wonder.—" Chear up, my Fanny;" ſaid he, every moment attentive to me—Chear up my Fanny, all will go well."

" It will indeed my lord," ſaid Mrs. Clayton —(who had, till then, ſtood behind Mrs. Burdet—they had both been let in together, ſoon after my ſuppoſed mother, on their inſiſting that they had ſomething to reveal of the greateſt importance.) " Miſs Charlotte Sel- " wyn was placed under the care of Mrs. Bur- " det by me, when ſhe was not above a fort- " night old: her mother was the only daughter " of Sir Thomas Combes.

" Yes, madam," continued Mrs. Clayton, " Sir Thomas is your grandfather. Mr. Sey- " mount had long been in love with Miſs " Combes, on whom I waited, but never could " prevail on his father to conſent to their mar- " riage, unleſs Sir Thomas would give her a for- " tune: however, on *his* refuſal, the lovers found " means, tho' unknown to *me*, as their meet- " ings were abroad, to be happy without his " leave. My young lady at length, with " much contrition, informed me of the con- " ſequences with which thoſe meetings had " been attended, vowing that ſhe never would

" ſee Mr. Seymount again, if I would but
" aſſiſt her upon the approaching, and dreaded
" occaſion. To make ſhort of my ſtory, I
" contrived matters ſo that ſhe was delivered
" of a fine girl with the utmoſt privacy: the
" midwife and myſelf were the only perſons
" acquainted with the affair: the former took
" care of the child till I heard of Mrs. Burdet
" as a nurſe: my young lady then gave me
" twenty guineas, ten of which I placed with Miſs
" Charlotte Selwyn (for ſo I was ordered to
" call her) in Mrs. Burdet's hands. Soon af-
" terwards, on my lady's going to France with
" a friend of her mother's, I carried the other
" ten guineas to the nurſe, not knowing who
" to truſt with the ſecret, and intending to
" ſee the child again when we returned to
" England. But my lady dying in about a
" month after our arrival at Paris, I went into
" the ſervice of another Engliſh family, with
" whom I remained in France and Italy, till a
" few weeks ago—Hearing of the death of an
" uncle who had left me an annuity, I reſolv-
" ed to come back to my native country, the
" ſight of which brought my firſt dear lady ſo
" ſtrongly to my mind, that I determined to
" enquire after the child, and Mrs. Burdet
" told me what ſhe has related: Then, finding
" that the obſcurity of her birth only had
" hindered her alliance with Lord Woodford,
" I thought it my duty to clear up that point:
" I hope I have done it to the ſatisfaction of
" every body preſent, and I dare believe that
" Mr. Seymount will be very much pleaſed to
" acknowledge the young lady for his daughter,
" whom I am happy to ſee ſo lovely and ac-
" compliſhed, for the ſake of my dear lady,

" who

" who, bating that one miſtake in her con-
" duct, was the moſt amiable of women."

Here ſhe ſtopped, and received the approbation of Lord and Lady Woodford. As to myſelf, I was loſt in amazement, and a kind of baſhful ſatisfaction. I rejoiced to find that Mrs. Wanley, who had diſcovered ſo few maternal ſenſations, was not my mother, but I grieved for the indiſcretion of her to whom I really owed my birth.

My lord, ſeeing my agitation, ſtrove to calm my diſordered mind.

My lady propoſed to Mrs. Clayton the making known to Mr. Seymount his daughter's ſituation, firſt aſking her ſon if he admitted the propriety of ſuch a procedure.

" Undoubtedly, madam," replied he; " tho' with regard to myſelf, let my wife—
" for ſhe will ſoon be my wife—find a father
" or not, let her be called Fanny or Charlotte,
" ſhe will be equally dear to me; yet, I ſhall
" always prefer the name of Fanny, becauſe
" knew her firſt by *that* name."

I bowed, and thanked him—thanked him alſo again and again, for having ſaved me from Sir Thomas, and from Mr. Seymount, from a grandfather, and from a brother.—Wonderful are the ways of heaven!

Mrs. Wanley, as ſoon as Mrs. Clayton left us to go to Mr. Seymount's, would have walked off, but my lord inſiſted upon her ſtaying till her return, to give evidence, if neceſſary; ſhe ſhe was therefore conducted into the parlour with Mrs. Burdet—My Lord, Lady Woodford, Lady Anne, and myſelf, then talked over the unexpected *denoûement* of my little hiſtory. My lord murmured exceedingly at our wedding's

ding's being poſtponed, unavoidably, to the next day.

In the midſt of his tender complaints Mrs. Clayton returned, and with her came the two Mr. Seymounts, father and ſon; the former cried out, "Where is my girl?—Many and many "fruitleſs enquiries have I made after the "daughter of my Charlotte."

Falling at my father's feet, I begged his bleſſing.—As ſoon as he had bleſſed me, we wept over each other. Young Seymount then, ever impetuous, ruſhed into my arms—the words *brother—ſiſter*—inſtantly interchanged, made an almoſt inſupportable addition to the pleaſure which ſwelled my father's heart—"Since you "are deſtined," ſaid my brother, in his lively manner, "to be married to Lord Woodford, "I am heartily glad that you prove ſo nearly "related to me, otherwiſe his lordſhip would, "moſt probably, check my tranſports upon "this animating occaſion."—

We could not help ſmiling at this ſprightly effuſion of my brother's—"You know, Char-"lotte," continued he, (for that is now your name, I think) "that I had always a natural "propenſity to love you."

Lord Woodford told him that he ſhould be always happy to call him *brother*—laying a particular emphaſis on that word, and looking archly at the ſame time, at Lady Anne.

Lady Anne's face glowed while ſhe complimented him about his new ſiſter.

He gallantly, replied, "That he would not "for more than he could name, have her la-"dyſhip ſo near him in the table of conſan-"guinity."

The

The next thing to be done was to diſmiſs our informers. Mrs. Wanley was ſuffered to depart, ſufficiently unhappy by the contempt of every body in the room. Mrs. Burdet was pretty ſmartly reprimanded, but afterwards forgiven. As to Mrs. Clayton, ſhe was, as ſhe deſerved to be, handſomely rewarded.

The next morning my father gave me, with looks, ſtrongly expreſſive of ſatisfaction, at the altar, to my lord, and, by ſo doing, made me the happieſt of women.—My father told his ſon, at the ſame time, that he muſt ſpare me part of his fortune, out of regard to the memory of my mother, and out of affection to myſelf.

In ſpite however of the felicity which I enjoyed, I could not help lamenting the fate of an unfortunate mother: with my tears, on that mother's account, I mixed fervent acknowledgments to heaven, and to my amiable huſband, for having preſerved me from a ſimilar fate. As to Sir Thomas, my grandfather, every body thought it beſt not to take any notice of him; after his behaviour to his daughter and to me, no honour could reſult from an alliance with him.—His own remorſe, it was highly probable, would, one day, ſufficiently puniſh him for all his criminal proceedings.

My dear lord, being obliged to make a viſit to his uncle in Derbyſhire, who once occaſioned ſo much uneaſineſs to me, choſe to leave me here, leſt I ſhould be too deeply affected by the melancholy ſcene to which he had been ſummoned, as his uncle was given over. During *his* abſence, I became as eaſy as I could poſſibly be, at ſuch a juncture, in your acquaintance. You urged me many times to inform

form you of the hiſtory of my life, after having heard me mention ſeveral parts of it, which you thought extraordinary. I have obeyed you by writing it; but my lord will not let me ſend it to you till he has peruſed it himſelf.

My dear lord Woodford has peruſed it, and he tells me that it has given him more ſatisfaction than he can expreſs.—May he be ever as well pleaſed with me as he is at preſent, and then I ſhall ever ſubſcribe myſelf your *happy*, as well as your ſincere friend,

CHARLOTTE WOODFORD.

FINIS.